



THE AUTHOR
R.M.S. Orduña, 1936.

[Frontispiece

RAG-TIME AND TANGO

PHILIP GUEDALLA

*Ah! me arm aches, and the sleeve of me little
coat is wore ; I am so eager to write it all off
to me ant.*

MUSLIN

*To the strand of the Daughters of the Sunset,
The Apple-tree, the singing and the gold.*

HIPPOLYTUS

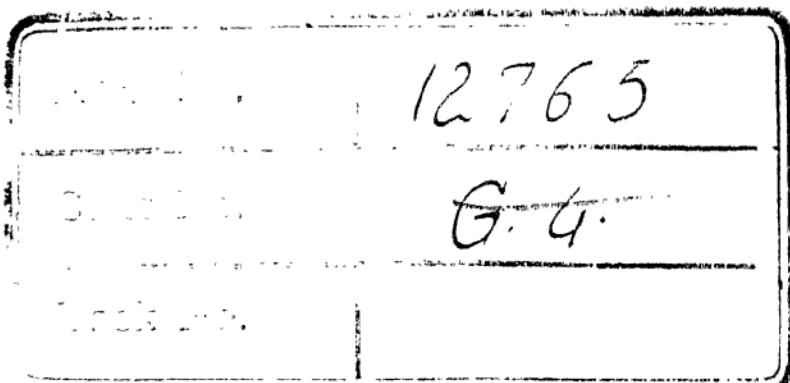
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RAG-TIME AND TANGO CONTAINS MR.
PHILIP GUEDALLA'S STUDIES OF THE
AMERICAS, NORTH AND SOUTH, FOR
INCLUSION IN THE UNIFORM EDITION
OF HIS COLLECTED WORKS.

FOR THIS VOLUME HE HAS ASSEMBLED
AND REVISED UNCOLLECTED PIECES
TOGETHER WITH HIS WRITINGS WHICH
FORMERLY APPEARED UNDER THE
FOLLOWING TITLES:

CONQUISTADOR: AMERICAN FANTASIA
ARGENTINE TANGO

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THE MODERN WORLD lies on both sides of the Atlantic in the same way that civilisation once grouped itself round the Aegean and later, as its scale increased, along the coastline of the Mediterranean. For we live in the Atlantic age ; and nothing could be more lopsided than to take a merely unilateral view of this phenomenon. The crusted European who regards the Americas as a colonial extension of his own continent is at least a century out of date, and the American who thinks of Europe as a morgue of ruined buildings and decaying institutions is just an ill-informed provincial. The simple truth is that our age owes its broad outline to the interplay of forces generated in the power-houses on both sides of the Atlantic ; and it is hardly possible to study modern Europe without some knowledge of America. Indeed, the pity is that so few Europeans seem to have the slightest means of acquiring any. For the crowded history of the Americas is practically unexplored on this side of the ocean, whilst our grasp of the contemporary Transatlantic scene appears to be confined to crime reports and Stock Exchange quotations.

This unfortunate hiatus must be remedied by every means within our power ; and one class of the community is well situated to perform the duty, since so many European writers cross and recross the Atlantic with the regularity of smoke-room gamblers. The British author is a familiar, perhaps a too familiar, phenomenon in the United States, and the literary Frenchman is a common object of the South American seashore. For the French go to Buenos Aires as naturally as our own novelists head for the Middle

West. More fortunate than most, I have had opportunities of travel in both sections of the New World; and my observations are assembled in the present volume. Ten years ago a tour of the United States took me as far afield as California and Texas; and the printed consequences formed a volume called *CONQUISTADOR*, which reappears here under the year 1927. That was a survey of the country as prosperity climbed to the dizzy pinnacle of 1929, when Mr. Coolidge reigned in the White House (and shrewdly asked, when I was introduced to him as a writer, for what newspaper I wrote); and I take a modest pride in having diagnosed six years before my unpleasant dream came true that "mass-production presupposes mass-consumption, and that consequently any interruption, however momentary, of the community's ability to consume would dislocate the entire . . ." But when I next saw Washington, another President was on the throne and we had all lived through the breathless days of March, 1933, when breaking banks were three a penny and the New Deal was very new indeed. Since there were not so many European witnesses who watched that astonishing catastrophe from close at hand, I have included my own notes on what it looked like to a British visitor. The same journey gave me a sight of Charleston in the full glory of its spring flowering, of Lee's battle-fields in front of Richmond, of the tall shoulder of Vicksburg as it stood up to face the thunder of Grant's guns, of Yorktown where the British domination ended and the quiet beach at Jamestown where it began, of Salt Lake City with its queer air of something only half disclosed, and the big mountains standing up behind Seattle as our steamer nosed its way across the straits towards British Columbia. These things are not written here, although they served to deepen one visitor's acquaint-

ance with the vast scene as our American winter turned to a Canadian spring.

But there is more than one America ; and in 1931 a happy summons took me to Argentina and Brazil, resulting in a good many things, of which one was a book first issued in the name of ARGENTINE TANGO and reprinted here. Duties in the same area recalled me to Brazil in 1934 and sent me back to Buenos Aires to renew old friendships and to live through that memorable evening when I sat patiently in a ring-side seat (for the sufficient reason that I could not get away), while twenty thousand people did their level best to burn the building down because of a slight disagreement with the referee about some heavyweights and were finally prevailed on to go home to bed by the combined persuasions of sword-bayonets and tear-gas bombs, without recourse, however, to the ultimate expedient of boiling water from the fire-engines that were waiting hopefully just round the corner. That noble entertainment, for which I can never hope to make any adequate return to my distinguished host, is not in these pages. Nor are the splendours that we saw in Mexico, when Popocatepetl veiled himself as the road plunged down towards the incomparable terrace of Cuernavaca, and the tall ahuehuetes stood in the shadows of Chapultepec where Maximilian and Carlota waited for their fate, and the bright tiles of church façades at Puebla danced in the sun, and all the corner-stones of Teotihuacan grimaced and writhed to make its visitors acquainted with the first America of all.

Or was the very first America the low Bahamian shore Columbus saw as the long mid-ocean swell ran out toward his landfall, where the clouds are always piled along the sky and we swam in and out among the flashing fishes of the Spanish Main ? For there are so many Americas ; and each of them seems to be more

worth knowing than the last. That is why it was a pleasure to collect these random notes of an unenterprising visitor to some of them.

PHILIP GUEDALLA.

1937.

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THE discovery of America is an event viewed with mixed feelings on both sides of the Atlantic. If it had never happened, life would have been much simpler over here for stockbrokers and Foreign Offices, while beyond the ocean Mr. Hearst would have been left undisturbed with Sitting Bull and Montezuma to evolve a pure Americanism uncontaminated by European interference. The world we live in would be a curiously restricted place, with nothing to smoke, a good deal less to drink, and nowhere for Sir Hugh Walpole to go to or for Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler to come from. There would be no jazz, Negro spirituals, high-power salesmanship, New Deals, or women's clubs. Not that the account would be entirely on the profit side, since all our film stars (if we had any) would be Continental and our cigars of wholly British manufacture. The world would be the poorer for the tango and the rumba, avocado pears, the higher forms of federal government, Mickey Mouse, the prose of Henry James, the poetry of Mr. T. S. Eliot, locomotives with cowcatchers, Western fiction, and one incomparable voice that told a crowded audience one afternoon at Gettysburg how four-score and seven years ago their fathers brought forth on that continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, concluding unforgettably that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth....

To that extent the world would be an infinitely poorer place if America had not been discovered. And has anybody ever stopped to think of the consequences if all the people who have gone there had had nowhere to go? What might Spain have been, if the energy of the Conquistadores had been left to expend itself in Europe?

Where would the movies be, if Mr. Chaplin was still one of Karno's Mumming-birds? How could the Continent have found room for its surplus population or lecture audiences for its surplus novelists? What would be the state of public morals, if we still enjoyed the company of the Pilgrim Fathers or if the inspired polygamy of Brigham Young remained to brighten life in the Mother Country? The bare hypothesis opens wide the flood-gates of speculation; and we are left guessing helplessly, faced with the conclusion that the discovery of America is about the one historical event that really mattered since Rome won the Punic Wars (and neither of them, it is worth remembering, owed much to Nordics).

For the voyage of Columbus took the human race clear through the gateway that stands between modern times and the vague area inhabited by total strangers whose proceedings on the narrow stage of the Middle Ages are uncertainly interpreted to us by historians. That was its full significance; and it is impressive to recall that we owe the whole of it to a single man with an obsession. There have been other adventures in human history, but none with such stupendous consequences; and their immensity lends a wild fascination to its slightest details. Of almost equal fascination are the vague hints of something lost and waiting there beyond the misty ranges of the ocean that drew him on the long road across the Atlantic, of his shadowy precursors in western navigation, of that Norse trader who was blown beyond the sunset and "found a strange people who spoke Irish." One has always to resist the easy fallacy that discoverers find something at their journey's end which is rather like the country that we know ourselves. But Gudleif Gudlangson's encounter with the Irish-speaking aborigines, combined with one authority's conclusive proof of extensive Jewish participation in Columbus' voyage, makes it a little difficult to resist a ribald picture of Manhattan in 1492 bearing a strong resemblance to the familiar hometown of the Cohens and the Kellys. So perhaps New York is the Eternal City after all.

RAG-TIME

To
My Charming Guardians
The Pullman Porters of America

PASSPORT

“... to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford him every assistance and protection of which he may stand in need.” The urbane request concluded in a smother of armorial bearings, and the voice fell silent. It seemed to come from very far away. For it was the voice (so the inscription ran) of George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, Earl of Kedleston, Viscount Scarsdale, Baron Ravensdale, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, a Member of His Britannic Majesty’s Most Honourable Privy Council, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire, etc., etc., etc., His Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. From beyond the clouds, seated sedately in the most exclusive company of all, that stately form seemed to direct my *Odyssey*, as other Olympians my predecessor’s after another war. Surely Zeus himself was my protector ; and as he waved me on, perhaps the broad shoulders (frock-coated even in the Hereafter) shook with invisible amusement. For under that august protection one more child of the Old World was setting out to try conclusions with the New—another Daniel come to judgment, and a little nervous of the lions.

The approach was simple and romantic. How few of us confess the rich romance with which Englishmen regard the United States. The lure is not in their wide horizons (for we have wide horizons of our own), nor in those bright financial prospects which Anglo-Saxons have agreed to term “opportunity.” Let others feel that spell. Latins, sunk in their Mediterranean slumbers, may yield themselves to the illusion that new countries throb with romance. But

Englishmen, whose dismal fate it is to settle them, know that new countries are the least romantic. Why, otherwise, the annual pilgrimage of a New World in systematic search of romance in the Old ? Besides, what places in the modern world are really newer than their fellows ? Are they not all, since the Industrial Revolution, of the same age—the age of their machinery ? Two cities in two hemispheres, each devoted with a common gesture to the production of cheap automobiles, are filled with corresponding plant and consecrated to the same unpretending mission. Which is the elder ? For in each identical machinery was installed at the same moment. Surely Detroit and Coventry are sisters, however flattering it may appear to regard the one as a stupendous child, the other as a gallant parent. For newness is not a quality confined to the New World. It was new once, of course, when the first caravels voyaged uncertainly towards it and landing-parties asked startled Mohawks to direct them to the Great Cham of Tartary. It was still new, when rifles cracked in the great woods and lonely birds wheeled watchfully round the infrequent smoke of cabins. But in those years the Old World was growing new as well. A Frontier called (and pioneers responded), when half England moved northwards in pursuit of coal and made its clearings in the woods, its settlements among the Yorkshire moors and on the bare hillsides of Lancashire. For we all have our Covered Waggon.

The American appeal owes little to its newness. It grows, for Englishmen, on the far richer soil of genuine romance. Somewhere beyond the sunset dwells, to our heated fancy, a fairyland of incredible things—of Oberons incalculably rich, of Titanias lovely beyond the dreams of younger sons, of lesser fairies lit with the fairy glow of Kleig lights and dancing in their rings where the sea meets the Beverly Hills below Hollywood. That Elfland's horns may sometimes be encountered not too faintly calling in our dance-music, its fairies on our screens ; its Puck, the bootlegger, performs his miracles whenever we go to the theatre ; and as we open

any magazine, its magic is all about us. For, to the British mind, America is now the land of dreams-come-true. Our fathers knew it only as the home of redskins, buffaloes, and Colt revolvers, peopled by scouts, confidence-men, and slightly sententious darkies. But, for us, that air is heavy with hi-jacking, automatics, Romneys, corners in wheat, First Folios, and all the rich scents of modern piracy. The whole continent is one big Treasure Island, with blind Pew tapping at every corner and a hope (how rarely realised) of Long John Silver at the White House. Small wonder that we thrill at thoughts of the land where everything is possible —the late William Jennings Bryan, syncopation, Henry Ford, Niagara, Miss Gertrude Stein, Prohibition, Mr. Sinclair Lewis, earthquake, flood, William Hale Thompson, and all the latest wonders of the world.

Here is romance for jaded palates, and we throb responsive. Not otherwise intrepid maiden ladies of uncertain age glowed with romance, as the steam-packet bore them from the trim lawns of Lord Palmerston's England, past the bright railings of the Second Empire, to the heaped skylines of romantic Sicily. For in Sicily anything might happen—*banditti* in delicious pointed hats, cross-gartered muleteers, a handsome goatherd, ransoms and rescues, and the delicate attentions of Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Catania.

Romance, which came (like nearly everything) out of the East, follows the sun ; and as we strain our eyes across the sea we catch the glow of its stupendous setting in the West. For it was eastern, when we first learned to be romantic. The earliest figures of romance came, riding attenuated chargers, out of the desert ; and for a while their scimitar, their burnous, and their dark Zuleika engaged us. Then the focus of romance shifted a little westward, and the heroic Greek replaced the Bedouin. The vogue was all for Klephths and yataghans and Palikars and broken columns. Westward again (to be precise, a little north of west), until for a brief, incredible interlude Germany became the home of romance ; and ragged clouds drifted with hooting owls above ruined

castles on the Rhine. Still westward, till the castanets sounded the authentic note of romance a few years later, as Carmencita and her *contrabandistas* strode gallantly into the hard Andalusian sunlight and took their rakish poses. But in Spain the moving finger of romance had touched the edge of Europe. Quite unperturbed, it crossed the Atlantic.

That, perhaps, is how America became to British eyes the last citadel of romance, outlined against the West with its small, gesticulating figures etched sharply on the glow behind them. What Childe Roland worthy of his spurs would not ride out to such a Dark Tower and sound his horn ?

The approach, I think I wrote, was quite romantic. And the return ? Knights errant are often highly reticent after the quest is over. An exhausted charger ambles up the hill ; the castle gates clang to behind it ; and we are left outside, in doubt as to the temper of the dragon and even the beauty of the maid. Was there, we sometimes wonder, a maid at all ? So, also, the intrepid female, homeward bound from Sicily, creeps all unravished back to Cheltenham. And, wiser (perhaps) than I, both knight and lady keep their own counsel. Yet I feel that silence would be unmannerly. Besides, it is so tempting for a traveller to tell traveller's tales.

These, then, are a few traveller's tales. Before I tell them, let me explain their limitations. Three months, which is a long time for any traveller, is a short time for the United States ; and though the road from Central Park to the Rio Grande, out to the Golden Gate and back again is long as well, it is not long enough for any man to learn a continent. Perhaps he may unlearn ; but there was little time for learning. So there is no attempt here at any ordered survey of the past, present, and immediate prospects of the United States (with maps, appendices, and a posthumous Introduction by Lord Bryce). The object of these pages is far humbler. Having crawled, buzzing slightly, across a vast window-pane, I felt that news of my adventure might

interest some of the other flies—and, perhaps, the pane itself. I have described a surface ; and surfaces, I warn the student, are superficial. Deeper studies may be safely left to those whose stay was briefer still.

So I compile my traveller's tales. The journey, as I have hinted, was wildly exciting. How far the excitement held, where it collapsed and when it rose again, the tales themselves may show. But they cannot render the continuous surprise that any visitor must feel, as a large continent gives him a gracious welcome. So that grateful astonishment of his must be the undertone of accompaniment to all these tales, the drone of my little bagpipes. For my thanks are all omitted. No private names stand in these pages, either for good or evil. My hostesses and hosts (and how clearly I see them, on docks and railway platforms, platforms of public halls, and in those dreadful little rooms behind the platform where hurried speakers meet their chairmen ; seated in kindly rows, or standing in alarming circles ; but always welcoming—at doors, in hotel lobbies, halls, and dining-rooms—hospitably wielding tea-pots, coffee-pots, and utensils even less hallowed by the law) my hosts and hostesses, alas ! are all unnamed. So is the citizen who borrowed my umbrella on the train between Minneapolis and Cedar Rapids, Ia. For it seemed fairer so.

I present my passport, then. One pair of eyes, *item* of ears, both reinforced by a consuming interest in nearly everything, must constitute my only claim to enter. And now may I begin my traveller's tales ? I have heard better ones. But they were someone else's—and that would be cheating.

SEA-PIECE

(*mid-winter*)

LIT, like the House of Commons, from above (but with better music), the big brown room swung gently on the North Atlantic. The shaded lights hinted discreetly at the *décor* of some indeterminate Louis ; and, Louis no less, chairs of remotely Gallic ancestry stood round the little tables with a silent hint of conviviality. Less mute in its appeal, but equally convivial, the band played on behind its undergrowth on the big dais at the end. It played *Aida* with tremendous emphasis (that march, with its terrific opening for horns that opens upon nothing, always recalls the vast portico in front of Euston Station) ; it wrung our hearts with the last, strident moments of unhappy *Butterfly* ; and sometimes (but this was in the evenings) it wailed the very latest invitation to the dance with a gently thudding drum and saxophones hooting low. It ran up and down the whole rich gamut of restaurant music before our inattentive ears as we sat, drooping a little, in the *décor* of whatever Louis to hear the music of whatever *maestro*.

For we were undeniably dispirited. The lights, the band, the little tables, and the whole illusion of a vast hotel were spread before our unappreciative eyes, and we stared at them in ungrateful apathy. How wonderful it was to sit there beyond Land's End, ordering drinks and listening to the music. We told ourselves how wonderful it was at frequent intervals. But nothing responded ; no spark within our listening hearts leapt up to greet the miracle, as we sat drooping in our chairs. Not ours the fierce, almost professional enjoyment of any problem in wholesale catering successfully overcome that lights Mr. Arnold Bennett on his way through the hotel lounges of the world. How eagerly

he would have counted all the forks, fingered how lovingly each delicious tap in our secluded bathrooms. For him the romance of large hotels has surely effaced the mystery of the sea, promoting Frederick and Gordon over the heads of Drake and Nelson. Yet Drakes, in a sense, ourselves, we sat at small round tables in mid-ocean ; and as the fox-trot moaned, the ferns in front of it quivered a little to the throbbing engines, and the big brown room swung gently on the North Atlantic.

Outside, dark mountains veined like marble, stretched endlessly away to a low skyline. It was a tumbled country of flung hills and valleys, of sharply tilted slopes and valley-floors that rose suddenly to be crest-lines in a lunar landscape of tormented mountains, all coloured to a noble blue and veined like marble ; and it ran quite unbrokenly from our cut-water to the low skyline, where America waited somewhere behind the mists. It was a silent country, except where it ran hissing past the port-holes ; and as we toiled across it at unusual angles, it seemed to watch from all its summits a little sullenly, staring without a sound. Sometimes a plume of smoke stained its horizon at the distant rim, or another traveller was seen for an instant labouring up a long acclivity ; and once an ostrich-feather, drooping and white, appeared upon its surface, propelled by a black rectangle that vaguely recalled a four-wheeled cab and indicated (to less terrene eyes) a whale. Someone, forgetting the hotel behind us, said, "There she blows" ; inmates of literary tendencies remembered *Moby Dick*, whilst eager neighbours asked hopefully for icebergs, and for an instant we almost seemed to be at sea. But the long journey was resumed across the endless upland, where the blue hills stood in long ranges, and we went smoothly past their marble slopes without a sound.

There was a sound, though. Inaudible on deck, sea-fanciers will recall it as the authentic music of the sea. For the inner parts of ships (and, after all, it was a ship) are filled with an unceasing creak. The little rooms, that look

so decorous and still, creak suddenly behind their Adam mirrors as if to startle unwary inmates with a sudden intimation of the sea. The trim joinery of their panels and the neat mouldings, all so impeccably terrestrial, seem to deny the imputation. But the creak belies them. Speaking suddenly, and low, it betrays the sea behind the walls ; and, obedient to their real master, the little rooms stand creaking all night long, the bathrooms creak among their perfect plumbing, and the long passages are bronchial with creaking. Even the big brown room upstairs, lit (like the House of Commons) from above, creaks gently from behind its panels of whatever Louis ; and when the saxophones drop to a confidential note, one can hear the sea above them talking in its unpleasant whisper.

LANDFALL

STRANGELY unobtrusive, America steals upon the explorer—not otherwise, perhaps, than a light ahead gleamed through the autumn dusk of an October night in 1492 to a small sailing-ship named *Santa Maria*, and the captain began to throw the drinks overboard. For he knew that he had discovered America. One can almost see the scene—the sad faces of the Spanish sailors in the waist of the little ship, the waiting barrels on the deck, Columbus' muttered words of a farewell to a favourite hogshead, and then a dismal splash. . . .

That is, no doubt, the version of Columbus' landfall that will be taught in the schools of the Republic, when the facts have been brought into a becoming conformity with the Eighteenth Amendment. And why not? Was not a grotesque election once fought by an extremely able man in the second city of the Union upon the simple but alluring issue of amending its school textbooks into line with some of his supporters' prejudices? For that judicious statesman demanded ampler recognition for the Revolutionary services of Washington's Irish (Irish abounded in his constituency), as well as of his Germans (Chicago was once termed the sixth German city in the world) and his Poles (nor were Polish names unknown upon the voters' lists); indeed, irreverent conjecture hinted that, being already sure of the Negro vote, he made no historical claim for Washington's Negroes.

As any student of democracy could have foretold, he won the election. He won it mainly by a free use of the compelling cry "America First." And, again, why not? What country could resist that appeal? Not mine, I think; nor France (for even the sluggish blood of Europe can be made to pulse more quickly with the raw wine of

patriotism) ; but, least of all, his own, devoted by a long and glorious tradition to all the exercises of organised emotion heightened by the very last devices of publicity—the nobly waving flag, the soundly beaten drum, the rich eloquence of Conventions, and annual holocausts of Fourth of July fire-crackers. So one had half expected some stupendous intimation of all the wonders that lay in waiting a mile or so ahead—a fanfare of headlines, flourish of posters, tucket of sky-signs, or a grand set-piece of advertisement with linguistic rockets starred along the zenith and Catherine-wheels of appreciation revolving in mute ecstasy.

But the landfall was oddly unobtrusive. For America steals on the explorer out of the morning mist. The big blue mountains of mid-ocean were far behind us now ; and smooth levels of grey water sliding past presently disclosed an indubitably American tanker, followed by real American gulls and by mud-flats yet more real. Then (o Columbus ; o Amerigo Vespucci) islets took shape and slid away into the mist. A dreary coast-line heaved slowly into the morning ; and even the sharp angles of coast-defences failed to lend dignity to Staten Island. For there is little of Gibraltar about Fort Wadsworth. The coast itself seems slightly incredulous ; and that rectangular silhouette, which guards the approaches of strong places and awes visitors to Metz with a sense of guns invisibly in waiting behind the shaven green of smooth escarpments, seems somehow out of place in full view of Coney Island. For one had not looked for guns of position among the switchbacks. Then, our engines running easily for the first time in six days, the Narrows slid past ; Liberty, avoiding the obvious by a praiseworthy effort, was small beyond expectation, a greenish miniature of her enormous fame ; and the ecstatic watchers on the deck saw tall, unlikely towers step suddenly out of the mist and group themselves into a city.

But down below, where the baggage waited neatly stacked outside relinquished state-rooms, the anxious voices still enquired along each sounding passage for the Something

Sisters and the Marchese della Cosa, as an eager Press reached out its tentacles to embrace those paragons of dance and diplomacy, the pride of our ship's company. Perhaps it found them, though I never saw the photographic record of their smiles, the full statement of their feelings on the skyline, thoughts on war-debts, play censorship, the current trial and the latest book, which are the toll exacted by the enquiring gate-keepers of the New World. One envies Christopher Columbus, to whom the skyline, at any rate, must have presented a simpler problem when he met the Sioux reporters. For in the somewhat uneventful landscape of Ambrose Channel the wary Genoese might well reply that he had not noticed one. But that excuse now lies far beyond the reach of the least observant mariner. So we admired it, each after his own fashion and to his appropriate reporter—the Something Sisters in duet, the Marchese with a touch of Latin fire, myself with a nervous gesture of propitiation. We admired the United States as well. True, we had not yet set foot in them. But if the ancients could sacrifice to an Unknown God, why not a cautious modern?

So the unlikely towers climbed slowly up the sky ; ferry-boats scuttled away to safety ; and the Hudson discharged discoloured ice-floes in untidy welcome of the arriving mariners, as the advancing city engulfed us—Marchese, Sisters, smoke-stacks, masts, and all. Tugs, with the consequential air inseparable from tugs in every port, took charge. A deft turn, and we were neatly anchored in a back street, where big black locomotives, hooting huskily, clanged the authentic bells of romance and propelled the right, the real, the inimitable cow-catcher. The New World called, and a scared explorer walked quickly down a gang-plank into it.

VILLE LUMIÈRE

THE arrival was fantastic—a crowd of tiny sky-scrappers clustering at the water's edge to watch the big ship coming up the Bay ; a slow dance of buildings, edging in front of one another to see us rounding the Battery ; and then, at some invisible wave of the wand, a piled city standing quite motionless. Etched on the winter sky, it seemed to wait, struck into immobility and bearing its buildings up like some enormous Caryatid. The monstrous silhouette stood waiting ; and as the massed buildings stared across the water, one saw for the first time architecture quite unadulterated, *sans* background, foreground, scenery, or aids of any kind—just architecture. You knew at that instant why Henry James, returning round-eyed from a lifetime of exile, had once termed it “the pin-cushion in profile.” There was no movement now. For architecture is always still ; and its stillness somehow gave a queer effect. One had an odd fancy of enchantment, a sudden hint of some magic word that had stilled guards, courtiers, stable-boys, ladies-in-waiting, and princess, and left the castle towers staring silently across the moat in the pale winter weather. Yet there was movement somewhere ; life still flutters in deep gullies at the foot of those enormous towers. For, if that fairy-tale is true, New York is the Unsleeping Beauty.

But as yet she only seemed to wait, politely averted from the dock, as if a thoughtful hostess should allow an interval for new arrivals to dress more suitably for the ceremonious moment of their introduction. Erect herself and plumed like a *débutante* with feathers of white steam, the city waited ; and to the eager eye the sight was still related—distantly, perhaps, but still related—to anticipation. One could still believe some of the things that had been written

of it. But there the resemblance ended. For New York was utterly unlike its legend.

The same, perhaps, is true of most legendary figures. Lord Tennyson, King Alfred, Pericles, Goethe—how few of these conformed to their reputed image. Cæsar would be a disappointment ; even Macchiavelli was only intermittently Macchiavellian ; and Napoleon, in a lifetime of unsparing effort, rarely achieved the Napoleonic. Indeed, at this very moment, busy (and not too scrupulous) pens point titillating contrasts between the Fathers of the Republic and their less paternal moods, while the energies of England's most ingenious ironist have been required to demonstrate that the Victorians were in the least Victorian. And places are no less deceptive. Naples is Neapolitan, perhaps, and Siena Sienese. But how much of Rome is truly Roman ? Florence is barely Florentine ; Lucerne is frankly British ; and Marrakesh, in bold defiance of tradition, festoons her skyline with unlovely lengths of corrugated iron. For places, like people, limp far behind their legends. Paris (and Bismarck) do their best. But Carcassonne cannot evoke the Middle Ages without the adventitious aid of a Second Empire restorer ; Venice, drowning in her own lagoons, was rescued by Mr. Ruskin ; and the Renaissance has quite fled from Blois. London, perhaps, alone (and Samuel Johnson) correspond with expectation in their opulent and ramifying solidity. But younger, frailer growths are more deceptive. Perhaps their mythology is just a thought too rich : they may grow into it in time. New York, at any rate, was wholly unlike its legend. One ought, of course, to be prepared. But then portraits (by other people) are always so misleading. . . .

The legend is almost painfully familiar. Conceived by generations of bewildered rustics and imposed upon a docile world by seas of print and shoals of celluloid, it evokes the terrifying vision (even poor Henry James had shaken an uneasy pen over “the terrible town”) of Manhattan, the devouring city. The Subway seethes ; the Elevated roars ;

the Great White Way performs its appointed function, as the rural moth stoops dizzily towards the blaze. On this stupendous roundabout deadbeats are transferred abruptly from park benches to Park Avenue, while market fluctuations maintain a corresponding service (in the opposite direction) for steel-jawed Wall Street operators, barely visible behind their ranged telephones and swathed, like Laocoon and his unhappy offspring, in the devouring coils that serpentine from the inexhaustible insides of their impassive tape-machines. Opportunity visits young men with firm, attractive profiles in the back bedrooms of apartment-houses, and young ladies secure auditions at the Metropolitan Opera House by singing artlessly over the washing-up on summer evenings, while fascinated gunmen pause in their occupations and even forgers stay their hands to listen.

Vast, brilliant, and a little sinister . . . movies and magazines assisting, I knew the legend of New York. What demented yokel evolved it on what ultimate prairie, we may never learn. Perhaps, indeed, its origins were far from rustic; and when we speculate about them, we may be wrong to conclude, from *post hick*, *propter hick*. For townsmen are often apt to dramatise themselves: it thrills relations from the country. Besides, the greater number of New Yorkers have not been townsmen long. It is, perhaps, the only city in the world that has a peasant population.

I knew the legend, though, and went towards it open-eyed. But the return was empty-handed. For New York, almost alone on the inhabited globe, seemed to have an insufficient grasp of its own legend. Or perhaps it was imperfectly rehearsed.

Something was there, of course—the big policemen twirling clubs, the bright eyes in Baxter Street, the Tombs, and streets that ran through echoing caverns under the Elevated. The sky-signs flashed and rippled, and the buildings soared up towards the day. But where was the

light—the fabled bright, Atlantic light? It had gleamed brightly enough outside; but in the city we groped endlessly through mediæval darkness round the base of vast, alarming towers, where kindly voices said gentle, commiserating things about the gloom of London. A citizen of Loches, one feels, might be at home here; and the fable of their light still lingers in those darkened streets from an age before rents and steel-construction had removed the sky to an invisible distance.

That portion of the legend failed me, and the rest was not much more helpful. Ruthlessness was strangely absent. Persons of positively benignant aspect walked the streets quite openly. Even the Metropolitan Museum, terror of European sale-rooms, had a remotely wistful air. I searched in vain for Manhattan, the devouring city. For where New York was most celebrated, it seemed least to be New York. Sometimes, indeed, it gave an odd effect of somewhere else, as of a vast and conscientious pupil moved by dim memories of Paris. Sitting with open ears on the *grands boulevards*, one had frequently suspected that the River Hudson flowed into the Seine. But here and now one learned the Seine to be a tributary of the Hudson. For Paris is often present in the colossal elegances of the shopping district, in its marble facings and the bronze furniture of its shop-windows—a Paris magnified, strangely expanded, and running considerable risks of ceasing to be Parisian in the process. For elegance is awkward stuff to magnify; and the Rue de Castiglione, if sufficiently inflated, may well become Fifth Avenue. Yet Paris was quite unmistakably present, as if massed military bands should render an air composed for solo violin.

Parisian no less (if veering slightly towards Montmartre) a cheerful commonwealth of arts and letters ministers to its enjoyment. There is a wealth of studio gossip, of familiar figures seen at regular tables in characteristic poses, that is strangely alien to the British habit. For Englishmen addicted to these odd pursuits are apt to ply their calling,

each in his corner. But New York prefers the more gregarious way that groups dramatic critics at the Algonquin and has its affinities in Paris—the darling Paris of tradition and, I have sometimes feared, of legend. Yet their audience despises Parisian models. For lacking any touch of that sublime exclusiveness (or is it ignorance ?), which excludes from Paris all books not written there and makes of the French the world's provincials, New York confronts the incoming tides of art with a broad gesture of acceptance. Symbolists from Prague, Ukrainian wood-sculptors, performers on unheard-of instruments from recently discovered countries, practitioners of every known and unknown variety of art, even historians from England—each and all are sure of welcome in that vast, expansive heart. For as she waits among the towers of her enormous and enchanted castle, each arriving prince may waken with his kiss the Unsleeping Beauty—happy, happy prince, but slightly, ever so slightly undiscriminating Beauty.

THE PROPHET AND HIS COUNTRY

THE drummers sit hatted in the big hotel lobby, flanked by a dull gleam of marble and enthroned in vast Renaissance chairs. Rotarians swarm round them on their way to the banqueting-hall, where iced water will circulate in enormous jugs and someone, flushed with this heady vintage, will declaim upon the perfect soundness of things in general. Bells ring; voices call; and bell-boys dart in and out among the throng like swallows. Piled baggage complicates the traffic; and in a corner, where the heavy bronze of Empire mouldings answers the gilt Corinthian capitals of the vast pilasters, highly-trained young ladies deny their correspondence to indignant voyagers because of insufficient knowledge on the part of both (or either) of their own initials. Behind a counter an accomplished man—the linch-pin of this whole rotating world—claims at intervals, “Next boy,” and releases one more messenger into the whirlpool, bound for the elevators and followed (*longo intervallo*) by his bewildered charges. The traffic seethes like an urban danger-point at rush-hour in this brightly illuminated town within a town. Down in the city lion and unicorn ramp gaily on a coping-stone; one feels that sometimes, a little weary of their grimace, they drop the pose and sit for a while or take a walk down State Street, when the pavements are empty and the silent shops are shut. For it was Boston; and the unwearied drummers still sat hatted in the big hotel.

But it was Boston, though, with its gracious offering of streets that curve, of streets that positively wander among their buildings like remembered streets at home. Boston, perhaps, remembers in the bright New England air, among its little hilly streets of houses. For the town had always a good memory, if slightly inconvenient. Did it not retain a

gleam of Cromwell's principles at an awkward moment in the reign of George III? This undulating sea-port, where the north wind comes in over Bunker's Hill and the west road runs out to Lexington, made the American Revolution. It heard the angry quaver in Sam Adams' voice and the quick, running footsteps in the winter moonlight as his braves ran for the tea-chests. It caught the sharp note of Howe's musketry; and when an older liberty than freedom from taxation was in question, the deeper voice of Abolition fell on its ear. For Boston has an ear. A shade fastidious, perhaps; but sensitive beyond a doubt. And is it not something that, in the vast receptive organism of the United States, one tiny portion should have the courage sometimes to reject? Malice would hint that Boston's forte is rejection. But malice, as usual, would be wrong. For Boston has never opposed a face of mere negation to the world around it; and its men of light—the clear New England light—and leading have, each according to his powers, duly lit and led their generation. Yet each retained from his parent, seated a little primly on the hills above the Charles River, one quality that is extremely rare in youthful communities where standards are uncertain and the world tends to take immigrants and immigrant ideas and immigrant books at their face value—the courage to disapprove. Acceptance is so easy. With fewer risks, it often wears a generous air; and its vacancy may sometimes be made to pass for a wide cosmopolitan culture. For what can be more impressive than a catholic awareness of Croat sculpture, Celtic folk-song, and Spanish dramatists? It is the easier path. But Boston, impelled austere by a Puritan tradition, has often chosen to tread the stonier road of rejection, a harder way since rejection implies a certain poise, some reference to standards, and a process (however summary) of discrimination. Her reward, beyond the little spires and cupolas of New England, was often unjust; since it earned her an unmerited fame for sour-faced disapproval. Integrity is always dangerous; was not Aris-

tides the least popular man in Athens? Yet even the charge of wholesale disapproval is less grave than imputations of its opposite. For the digestion suffers more from excessive catholicity than from a slight fastidiousness: the squeamish man lives longest.

And Boston, at its worst, was slightly squeamish. At its best, it preserved a set of standards in the Great American Desert; it knew its mind, having a mind to know; and in the universal uproar it retained an ear that could at least distinguish one sound from another. For Boston (I have already said it) has an ear. And when was that ear more sensitive than when a "small vague outsider" floated through the bright New England air, deliciously tormenting father, brothers, sister, nephews, and a grateful legion of attentive readers by a singular gift of indirect allusion—"to avoid naming it straight, but by dint of breathing and sighing all round and round it, to arouse in the reader who may have had a similar perception already (Heaven help him if he hasn't!) the illusion of a solid subject, made (like the 'ghost' at the Polytechnic) wholly out of impalpable materials, air and the prismatic interferences of light, ingeniously focussed by mirrors upon empty space"? For that haunting voice hangs, for the eager visitor, on the Boston air. He is for ever hunting echoes of Henry James up the little hills and catching distant gleams of that impalpable refraction. It was positively here that his demure young gentlemen walked genteelly along Back Bay to tea-parties, or his young ladies waited yet more demurely behind their half-drawn curtains for the arrival (always long and often, alas! permanently delayed) of the discreet young gentlemen. One could almost recover the ardours of Dickensians, come three thousand miles to chase phantoms through the Temple. The Dover Road, for them, is not more haunted than Beacon Street for me; and the Common is as thick with echoes as Lincoln's Inn. So the remembered wraiths come crowding. All his Bostonians pass by, pressing about the visitor as the faint voices of the

underworld pressed round Ulysses. Always a little tenuous, those figures seem still thinner as they rise on the Boston air, evoked by memory and the first sight of their actual dwelling-place. But they rise and rise ; and the blameless little streets fill with that impalpable Walpurgis. Faint spinsters in pursuit of answers to half-formulated questions ; young men at issue with fine shades ; and, greatest of his creations, that incomparable elder who returned upon his native country and faced it, like a large slow-spoken Sphinx, with riddles far beyond its comprehension. They were all there on that sedate and shadowy Brocken ; and as they danced across the field of fancy, one seemed to catch behind them gleams of a more substantial circle in dinner-table argument with fiercely brandished knives and forks—of the brisk Swedenborgian parent, of Wilky “the adipose and affectionate,” a silent, smiling little sister, the electric William, and “covered, like some marine crustacean, with all sorts of material growths, rich sea-weeds and rigid barnacles and things . . . hidden in the mist of his strange heavy alien manners and customs,” yet remaining under them all “dear old, good, innocent and at bottom very powerless-feeling Harry.”

. Not to be denied, they rose on the mind, as the little streets curved in and out, and lion and unicorn ramped on their coping-stone in State Street. The air was bright above the Common, and the big bridges groped across the ice for Cambridge. But the magic seemed to fail, as the long lines of box-cars hooted for switches down by the harbour, where Irishmen were telling Italians how to vote. Its call was fainter still, where the lit street-cars jolted past department stores ; and in the big hotel lobby, where Rotary refreshed streamed back to service and the un-moving drummers still sat with their hats on, it fell silent.

QUESTIONS

It is always easier to ask questions than to answer them : that is why the world in which we live contains more reporters than statesmen. Not that I have much fault to find with the reporters. For, on the whole, they make far less mistakes than the statesmen. But they ask far more questions—and questions, mile after dusty mile of questions, will be the main impression and the most abiding memory of a flurried traveller across the United States (or so many of them as lie between Sandy Hook and the Pacific in an eccentric line that lurched to left and right to take in Texas and Minnesota). For it is always question-time in America.

The questions wait for him at every stopping-place. Ascertaining his whereabouts by some mysterious alchemy, they ring with bland insistence on his room telephone and are shown smartly in to perch upon his trunks and search his soul with their enquiring litany—what are his impressions of the United States ? how does he view the last policies (or, perhaps, the last but one) of the State Department ? would he favour a censorship of plays, and why ? what is the future of the movies, sex, the skyline, American fiction, opera, the art of dancing, and the wave of crime respectively—or, if he prefers it, viewed as a whole ? The scared explorer murmurs the customary polite evasions, to be transformed into resounding truisms for to-morrow's paper. For skilful editing can breathe life into bones whose desiccation would have discouraged Ezekiel himself. But, long before that miracle, he is on the road again and speeding towards the same set of questions, three hundred miles away. Between stations, as he clangs and hoots and jolts his way across a continent, he is tormented by his own private questionings—why, on a luxurious railway-system, is tobacco treated as a secret vice only to be indulged in with

every accompaniment of furtive shame? what maniac, drawing names from what stupendous hat, baptised the stations? and what (the supreme mystery of the American continent) are the secret thoughts of those majestic men, who sit about all day with hats on in the Renaissance thrones of hotel lobbies?

But the danger is that these enquiries, which—trivial, if you will—yet constitute his genuine reaction to the new worlds about him, will be submerged in the interrogative tides of commonplace that flood in upon him at every halt. For when he wishes to reflect on Colour and its problem, he is forced to give ready-made opinions on Mexico. His mind fills slowly with impressions upon mass-production; he is just reaching the profound conclusion that mass-production presupposes mass-consumption, and that consequently any interruption, however momentary, of the community's ability to consume would dislocate the entire . . . when a fatal courtesy requires him to answer the young man who wants his views on China. And as he kindles to the stupendous vision of the unfolding West, they ask him what he thinks of Mr. James Joyce as compared with Mr. Theodore Dreiser.

These strange rites of initiation are among the most mysterious features of the Dark Continent. Why, in the name of sane and interesting journalism, is it supposed that the opinion of no one in particular (especially on matters upon which he is not qualified to have one) is likely to provide attractive reading-matter? And why does a proud continent refresh itself with the lightest thoughts of every passing stranger who may be pressed into its service as a momentary leader-writer and pontificates gravely upon subjects with which he is imperfectly acquainted? I suppose there is an answer. Most questions have one. But I have never found it, unless it lies in the abiding appetite of this eager race for personal acquaintance. Renowned (and justly) for its taste in *personalia*, it amazes each successive visitor with its glorious intimacy. In an expansive moment

it once described the least assured of its explorers as "a Study in Brown . . . a small, dark-complexioned man, with brown eyes, wearing a brown extreme English-cut suit, a tan shirt, brown and tan-striped hose, narrow brown pointed oxfords, carrying a dark brown overcoat and hat, and smoking a brown foreign cigarette." Can it be wondered that this blaze of hosier's publicity left him a little dazed ?

Yet the staring eye and rudely pointed finger of the paragraphist conceal a human feeling. Sometimes, of course, he is inadvertently ill-mannered, as when a dusty traveller, just off a train, consents to see a caller and is rewarded in the morning paper by a lament over his pitiable declension from the sartorial standards expected (Heaven alone knows why) of all British subjects. But the craving for contacts, which racks the American mind, is a real thing, a survival (possibly) of the age—even now not so distant—when a strange face was an event in the little township and the white tilt of an unfamiliar waggon stirred the farmer (and his wife) to transports of curiosity. This eagerness is the mark of an empty country ; and to a European, sunk in that complete indifference to new arrivals which marks an overcrowded continent, the mood is just a little touching.

Less engaging, though equally widespread, is the distaste for shorthand. For young gentlemen (and even younger ladies) appear upon such missions, assume the easy chair, make still easier conversation—and take no single note. If a reply should strike their fancy they may (if you are lucky) jot it down in the margin of the newspaper in their hands. But that will be all : no sharpened pencil, no capacious note-book, no mystic curves of Mr. Pitman. The practice, I am well aware, has lofty sanction. For journalistic practice, in a community that has given unusually deep thought to it, discourages the shorthand interviewer. His pencil, it is feared, might distract his recording eye ; and lest its flight across the page in hot pursuit of the stranger's opinions should disturb the clear vision of his haberdashery, he rarely

uses one. There is, of course, a basis of sound reason for the objection. Since personal impressions are the main desiderata, such things are more likely to be acquired through a watchful eye than with fluent Pitman. For the watcher on the back benches forms a far juster estimate of the Judge than the busy shorthand writer, humped above his flying pencil in the well of the Court. But some of us (vain mortals) are fonder of our views than of our "personality," that frankly mythical creation of the morning papers.

Not that the interviewer fails to reproduce them. The miracle is that, with his stub of pencil and his scribble in the margin of a newspaper, he manages so often to secure a reasonable record. Besides, apart from the reporter's freedom to bask in the sunshine of his victim's soul, the victim has often reason to bless his caller's emancipation from the slavery of note-books, since it sets the caller free to talk: I have learnt far more from reporters than they ever learned from me. The conversation of reporters is one of the neglected schools, in which a discerning traveller may learn America. It wears, of course, the weary disillusion common to all young persons under twenty-four who live behind the scenes. But it is singularly informing; and more may be learned about the true temper of local politics from ten minutes with two newspaper-men of opposing parties in a hotel bedroom than from three hours of explanation by local worthies in the course of a conducted visit to the "high-spots" of civic progress—the sewage-farm, the projected boulevard, and the new Children's Hospital (Nose, Throat, and Ear). So let not a stranger's voice (himself not unconnected with pens, ink, and paper) be raised in discredit of the American interviewer. He has learnt much from those importunate callers.

And where statesmen complain that their cherished convictions are sadly misreported, his sole grievance is that his own were set down precisely as they were uttered: a good interviewer should have made better ones.

DRY-POINTS

1. Niagara

THE trains slid up and down the line from Buffalo behind their big black locomotives ; the February sky wore its unlikely blue. Hardly a cloud drifted above Canada ; and, deep in its hollow, Niagara uttered its ageless, irresistible challenge to description. First seen as a haze of shattered water hanging on the edge of a vanished river, it reappeared to closer view as a wall of solid, sliding green. It stood there in the winter sunshine, fixed in the immobility of perpetual motion. Perfectly still, it took the sunlight on its smooth arch and on the unbroken wall that dropped away into the abyss with the immobile drop of a mountain-side, unmoving as a sleepy top, still as the icicles that fronted it across the hollow and festooned King George's street-lamps on the steep edge of Canada. Its stillness fascinated. Even the unceasing road had something of the unbroken quality of silence, as the glassy wall stood up immobile in the winter sunshine. But down below it something moved, where the still precipice of sliding water fell sheer away into a boiling fog. A slow Walpurgis of demented shadows eddied up towards the winter sun, mounted, then mounted higher still and fell, steamed up and dropped again into the grey and smoking trough that presently disclosed a tortured, reeling river, last seen a hundred feet above, under a haze of shattered water.

2. Railroad

The loose ends of American civilisation flowed slowly past the big Pullman window. Outbuildings leaned unsteadily towards us and were gone. Discarded automobiles rusted reproachfully on scrap-heaps, where the receding tide of progress had left them disembowelled. Small factories

almost swaggered by, labelled impressively "Plant No. 1"; the grave enumeration seemed to hint at vast industrial vistas, promptly contradicted by aggregations of the most woeful sheds. Our locomotive clanged the dismal bell, that carries to every British ear a hint of Sunday morning (nothing seems odder to Englishmen than rolling across a continent behind a disembodied Sabbath); and as the tracks wandered uncertainly through the dishevelled outskirts, backyards and building-lots lay all unsoftened in the hard American light.

No one had quite prepared the observer for these two ingredients of his landscape—the immense untidiness that, masked by the world's demurest house-fronts, lies behind the trim concrete side-walks of Time's latest birth, and the comforting deliberation of American trains. The last is almost unspeakably consoling. For the European fancy, haunted by its incurable romance upon American subjects, had visions of incredible speed, of big black cow-catchers whirling across receding prairies and ten-foot driving-wheels pounding dizzily over trestle bridges. But the reality was far more soothing, as the untidy outskirts flowed slowly past the window. The wise Pragmatist may warn us against "the most barren of exercises, the making of international comparisons." But in railway trains he warns in vain. For the winter climate provided by the heirs of Mr. Pullman quite precludes the reading of books; even his fellow-countrymen sit in a stupor over comic strips and cross-word puzzles or stare disconsolately out of the window. Smoking brings no relief, except to those prepared to pursue that anodyne on the unyielding sets of a dejected cell furnished with washing-basins and the illimitable conversation of travelling salesmen. So what remains, as the unsweetened building-lots go by and the bell clangs for level crossings, but the barren exercise of comparison?

We droop in our revolving chairs. Below the window, where the ampler telegraph poles of the New World slip

past, the steam pipes crack and echo in the mounting heat ; and we recall almost with emotion our fading illusions—the speed, the ten-foot driving-wheels, the trestle bridges. Yet American romance is nowhere more persuasive than in railway travel. Trains wear delicious names. “Scouts,” “Pathfinders,” and “Navajos,” redskins of every imaginable celerity, stand throbbing with steam up at platforms ; firemen in overalls look down, horn-spectacled and slightly self-conscious, from the tall cabs of waiting locomotives and shift cigar-ends in their mouths ; soft Alabama voices gently exclaim “All aboard” ; the driving-wheels fly round and grip the rails ; and the whole caravan—“Scout,” “Sioux,” or “Pathfinder”—moves off with a last gleam from the pictorial emblem on its rear platform. But there romance is ended. For, as the town goes by, it moves sedately ; but through the wider world beyond it moves sedately still. The “Raider” (my names and times are inexact, but the impression is clear) ambles across a continent at twenty miles an hour, rising at unusual moments to twenty-five ; “Scouts” race behind it—but no faster ; and the “Navajo” flutters his eagle feathers with the same gentle pace. Even the terror of the continent averages a genteel forty-eight. This mild progression affords a pleasant shock to Europeans, mesmerised by impressive nomenclature and the legend of American speed. We are so used to catching something more humbly named “the ten o’clock” and whirling into Scotland behind two pairs of racing wheels. The fells above Penrith have seen us pounding down towards Carlisle without an emblem or a name—but sixty miles an hour. How wise the sage Bostonian, who announced that “of all the forms of mental crudity, that of growing earnest over international comparisons is probably the most childish.”

Yet even comparisons should be just ; and justice, remembering the full horrors of European railway catering, will recall with gratitude the marvels of meal-time on American trains, to say nothing of the more bizarre attrac-

tions afforded by the barber's shop, the writing-desks "and modish stationery for correspondence," the "latest national weeklies and monthlies in attractive binders, for men, ladies and children," and (for graver moments) "the day's market report off the wires." For the Limited is home-like, as it ambles, with something of a ship's dignity and all a ship's consideration for its company, past the dishevelled outskirts.

Yet it was a relief to find the suburbs so untidy. One had been half inclined, at sight of endless vistas of irreproachable clap-boarded house-fronts, to accept that irritable fling of Mr. Sinclair Lewis at "a savorless people, gulping tasteless food, and sitting afterwards, coatless and thoughtless, in rocking-chairs prickly with inane decorations, listening to mechanical music, saying mechanical things about the excellence of Ford automobiles, and viewing themselves as the greatest race in the world." But the untidiness was reassuring. There seemed a chance that *Main Street* was wrong, that Mr. Lewis (that Great Victorian) had denounced his countrymen rather as Mr. Carlyle denounced our own than as truthful eyes observe them. For there is a human quality in building-lots; and ash-heaps are a sign of health. Egypt, we hopefully recall, left us its refuse. So why not Gopher Prairie? What else was Oxyrhynchus and the mound of Tell-el-amarna? Great ages have their ash-heaps; and there is a hope that every ash-heap may have its great age.

So the thoughts rose unbidden, as the last sheds went sprawling by. Inside the car the expanding steam pipes still reverberated. There was a gentle buzz of talk from the salesmen in the smoker. But our bell was silent now, as we sailed steadily across open country under a winter sky; and big telegraph poles stalked awkwardly across a foreground peopled only by platelayers, muffled and hooded against the cold, with now and then the brilliant smile and ivory eye of America's unsolved problem. A continent flowed by. . . .

3. New York Central

Across the river, where the ice-floes drifted down towards the sea, a line of hills was watching. Faced with brownish cliffs, they seemed to look down a little scornfully. For the Palisades of the Hudson frown, as if conscious of their slightly exaggerated reputation. Yet one should remember that they owe it to eyes accustomed to the monotony of Western plains. They looked, if truth must be confessed, a little tame to travellers fresh from the more tumultuous geology of Europe. For the Old World excels (as one might expect) in the oldest of all decorative arts—the judicious disposition of geological formations to compose a landscape. Happy the continent that has no geological history. Happy, indeed, but less attractive to the eye. For it is the paradox of scenery that its greatest beauties are always ravaged beauties. Scored with the tracks of glaciers, old continents outshine the smooth and uneventful features of their younger sisters; and loveliness, bred in the disordered ruins of dim geological catastrophes, still haunts them. So the Palisades seem slightly tame to west-bound explorers, fresh from Europe. But east-bound, after the featureless procession of the Plains, the eye acclaims them.

That afternoon they watched the ice-floes in the river; and the blocks sailed by, a shade derisive of the imprisoned steamers by the shore. The country lay under the monstrous untidiness of frost all the way from Yonkers to the pointed roofs of Albany. It was a mild thrill, perhaps, to hear the engines hoot across the water to Sing-Sing. But a greater thrill was waiting. For suddenly the jarring brakes had halted us right opposite a single name framed (and how rightly) in gold; and the frame enclosed the blessed word “Poughkeepsie.” The shocks of New-World nomenclature are rarely analysed. Perhaps too rarely, since more than half the charm of American travel resides in the place-names. What delight in Rolling Prairie; what grace in Miami (until it is pronounced as the indignant outcry of an angry car-

penter inquiring for "my 'ammer"); what unquenchable merriment in Ypsilanti. And what nobler introduction to the theme than the railway-line that runs, in geographical delirium, from Poughkeepsie to Rome, by way of Utica and Amsterdam, and then on to Syracuse?

It is absurd, of course, to be affected by such a trifle as a name. Yet familiar names, once mastered, are not easy to dissociate from familiar places; and successive shocks await the European memory on American railroads. Rome was a goods yard; Utica might be searched in vain for any monument to Cato; and it is not easy to respect the mentality that has located Berne and Geneva in the plain of southern Indiana. Yet the system is not without its moments of rare felicity; for Oxford, Wisconsin, lies in wise juxtaposition to Grand Marsh. But perhaps its crowning mercy is the delicious trinity (in three successive stations) of Siberia, Bagdad, and Bolo—the frozen North, the gilded East, and the pale shadow of a half-forgotten spy.

Is it unpardonably frivolous to be amused by such trivialities? Perhaps. Yet one must be kept amused on railway journeys, even while the more solemn portion of the mind admits that names must come from somewhere, that a man has a perfect right to call his town Toledo if he wants to, or even Palmyra. But there is more, perhaps, in the glorious and calculated disarray of American place-names than a mild joke or two. For it provides, in a neat and portable form, an exquisite parable of that New World, which is the Old World taken to pieces, shipped to another hemisphere, and re-assembled in a quite different order to make the United States. In one view, the great American *mélange* consists of all the ingredients of Europe granulated, passed through a sieve, thrown in the pot haphazard, and left (as the cookery books say) to simmer. All the elements are there, with one significant exception. For the French are considerably under-represented in that Gargantuan recipe. If France had been more present in the mixture, who knows what America might have derived from that

element, which has often been a light in the European darkness and more than once the binding of the European wall? Small wonder, though, in this grand amalgam where one hemisphere has been poured into another like a trunk hastily repacked, that Batavia should elbow Corfu and passengers for Goshen begin to get their baggage ready at Millersburg.

But I digress. For Rome lay behind us; we were past Oneida now; and Syracuse was coming. Soon we should see it; and as our engine's doleful bell clanged through its streets and past its waiting shop-fronts, we looked eagerly for Archimedes, tracing his circles in the sand.

4. *Waiting-Room*

The barber's pole rotated in its upright glass case like a demented sugar-stick. That gyrating tricolour almost seemed to call for music; but all its stripes—red, white, and blue—went round and round and up and up in an uncanny silence. Over in the corner a stupendous news-stand offered the Gargantuan fare of transatlantic journalism—Sunday papers a foot thick ablaze with comic strips, local evening journals that were a riot of corybantic head-lines, and bright-coloured magazines alive with stunning blondes or with open-air young men in lumberjacks and braces doing the manliest things all across their covers. These feverish delights were helped out by yet more hectic apples, polished within an inch of spontaneous combustion and ruddy to the point of apoplexy. Assorted candies tempted; strange, highly-coloured beverages waited to be consumed through straws out of little bottles; pencils in stacks prepared to solve their cross-word puzzles for exhausted travellers; and every known variety of chewing-gum stood ranged in order. It was a noble spread; even the pea-nuts were alluring, and I knew the pecan candy (at 10 cents the highly brittle packet) to be quite irresistible. Remembering the meagre fare of native book-stalls, which suppose the soul to be satisfied with last Wednesday's *Punch* and a piece of ink-eraser, I hung a momentary head.

Random sentences echoed in the great, vaulted roof. Its human contents mostly drooped on the transverse benches, looking a little like the shapeless bundles which composed their luggage and waiting hopelessly for someone to announce their train. Sharp footsteps crossed the stone floor briskly. At a distant counter an endless argument proceeded between a traveller with a sawing, plaintive voice and a young man in check shirt-sleeves, who wore an eye-shade rather jauntily and had his utterance slightly impeded by the last frayed inches of a cigar. The traveller, it seemed, had checked his baggage on some inaudible date from some point equally inaudible on another system. He sawed his way through an interminable narrative of railroad vicissitudes with frequent changes, at the end of which the baggage was not immediately forthcoming. The Company (in shirt-sleeves) asked for time. The traveller soared (or, more accurately, sawed) into eloquence, while the Company, only mildly interested, shifted the last inch of the frayed cigar and undertook a little languidly to check up on it. At this the narrative reopened more serratedly than ever ; and as the aimless dialogue proceeded, a head or two on the transverse benches turned listlessly to hear, and the words drifted up towards the noble span of the great, vaulted ceiling.

America will be singularly fortunate, if the next civilisation remembers it by its railway-stations. One of the wildest hazards of history is that which dictates to posterity the particular feature by which it recalls a preceding age. Rome, by some accident, is almost all aqueducts in our recollection, Egypt all funerals. We can scarcely imagine the Roman parent otherwise occupied than in building or repairing aqueducts, the Roman young couple walking elsewhere than to the shadow of their favourite arch, the Egyptian relative otherwise employed than in ordering mourning. Such chance survivals cause the oddest misconceptions, the most lop-sided reconstructions of the past ; and it is a shade disturbing to reflect that we shall lie one day, beyond all opportunity of contradiction, at the mercy

of such hazards. Some patient, fumbling excavator will happen on our least considered relics and build the dizziest conjectures on them. They will be hard, durable articles, of course. For all the flimsy things that are most typical of us will perish. Our books will all have gone ; so will our pictures (which is, perhaps, as well), to say nothing of our music, briar pipes, arm-chairs, brassies, fishing-rods, window-frames, footballs, and wall-paper. What remains ? Some isolated *cache* of discarded razor-blades will disclose a shadowy presence on the haunted sites of our deserted cities. Or the questing spade will turn up a rusting and congealed accumulation of used gramophone-needles ; flushed scientists will pass them reverently from hand to hand, whilst a protracted controversy reconstructs our lives from these imperfect data. One cannot think that, from the information at its command, posterity will envy us. . . . It is an odd reflection, which I commend to archaeologists, that we almost invariably misconstrue the past through missing its perishable items. From Rome, which we recall as a grim citadel of imperishable materials, was not all bronze and marble. Yet it is only in our steel and stone and iron that we shall survive.

That fate, undoubtedly, will be ours one day ; and when it comes, a well-wisher may be excused for hoping that, for America's sake, it will be remembered by its railway-stations. Better by these, perhaps, than by the writings of Miss Gertrude Stein. Ford cars will perish like the grass ; the saxophone corrodes and moulders ; and typewriters vanish with the snows of yester-year. So will cash-registers, Kodaks, and bound volumes of the Proceedings of learned societies. But somewhere, I trust, an unborn excavator's hand will lay bare the Union Station. Science, of course, will err (after an unsuccessful effort to connect the edifice with some form of public worship) in supposing that the dim generation of twentieth-century Americans passed their whole lives in catching trains (for the railway-station will perform for them the same misleading function as the

aqueduct for Roman life and the pyramid for Egypt). But might they not be pardoned, if they did? For they have such noble places to catch them in. The foreign visitor, indeed, succumbs to this temptation and does very little else. His American life is spent between one vast booking-hall and the next. For him, unnumbered red-caps endlessly recede down lengthening vistas; bells of phantom locomotives clang somewhere out of sight; and the hardly stranger, accustomed to the pioneer simplicity of European travel, parts with difficulty from the massive comfort of the waiting-room, where the barber's sign revolves its tricolour appeal with a flattering suggestion that he is careful of his appearance, the magazines hint softly from their covers that he requires a blonde young lady for the journey, and a book-store offers (subtlest flattery of all) to sell him one of his own books.

5. *Sunrise in Michigan*

It was black night on the empty street outside the sleeping hotel; and a lonely traveller stepped out into the chilly silence, leaving behind him a fine wasteful blaze of electrics and the slow stretching of a drowsy "bell-hop," as he faced without exhilaration the gleam of street-lamps on a wet, black street. Somewhere across the road a bright sign exhibited a promise of all-night refreshments, where the explorer found early workmen sitting round a counter on revolving stools and greeting the unborn day with dough-nuts, "cawfy," and bisected grape-fruit. Eight minutes later, as the clocks were striking six, the waiting taxi started into the darkness. For it was still black night.

The lit crucifixes of American lamp-standards gleamed down the empty streets. There was a wink of traffic-control electrics, and sometimes a glare from passing street-cars swept through the taxi's dark interior. But soon the city streets gave way to the long pavement of country roads. It was still night; but outside the city it was not so lonely. For the bright eyes of automobiles came swooping up the

road towards the town. Its workers were assembling for the day, and each of them sat at his steering-wheel behind his headlights. Lit cars stood waiting in silent alley-ways beside small houses, as the long string of workmen swept down the road in front towards their work. The road was black, rimmed by a mourning border of black fields. But in the sky darkness grew slowly visible—black clouds against a ground of black. Then the clouds grew blacker, as the sky behind them paled into greyness ; and the black road turned slowly grey—a grey strip running between black fields that seemed to hold an invisible hint of green. Very far away, behind the half-tones of the sky, something put out a broken gleam. It showed the edges of the clouds ; it showed the greying masses of the roadside ; and some exudation of it stained the grey strip of pavement a dingy white. The world was paling fast, and by its uncertain light a bleached road ran due south across a greenish, brownish country. The swooping headlights lost their magic and became dishevelled ‘flivvers.’ Tall chimneys stood up against the sky ; a bill-board croaked a grotesque (and slightly intoxicated) welcome to “ Jackson, City of Action ” ; and day had come to Michigan.

6. *Tank Town*

Somehow the situation seemed familiar. As I alighted from the tall step of the Pullman, received the last resplendent smile of its attendant darkey, and looked along the train, there was a hint of something dimly remembered. Yet the scene was anything but memorable. A Père Marquette train stood at a station—stood, rather (to be more precise), where a station would have been had anyone thought fit to build one. For a single shed in the middle distance was the sole indication. The waiting train filled the entire perspective, as its tall, polished sides took the level light of a winter afternoon. It hooted huskily ; the big cars slid by ; and the train receded slowly into Michigan. No other passenger had got out ; and I was left standing by the

tracks, alone with my small belongings and a vague sense that I had seen it all somewhere else before. The train, a dwindling point now in the rough Canadian landscape, moved deliberately out of the picture ; the tracks resumed their interrupted peace ; the station-shed, wholly unmoved by the sight of a lonely figure standing forlornly by its baggage, still occupied the middle distance. No one seemed to care ; the visible world was utterly indifferent ; the . . . Then I remembered. How many times had I seen movie heroines arrive precisely thus—the big locomotive (with impressive jets of steam) ; the long line of halted Pullmans ; the deferential darkey, as a trim figure comes tripping down the steps ; and then the train's departure, and the solitary arrival waiting, a little wistful, by its bag in an indifferent world. It was, of course it was, the recognised approach to life in a small town. In an ecstasy of recognition I almost shaded an eye to catch the last of the big, friendly train with its sympathetic brakeman and removed (close-up) one tear of glycerine.

Not more eagerly did Henry James acclaim, through slowly drifting clouds of circumlocution, some remembered aspect of Newport. For here it was, the indubitable small town of countless slightly sentimental dramas. Its stamp was on the chilly welcome ; and (better still) its tank, the authentic tank, was on the skyline. That ungainly symbol was my final confirmation. How soon, I wondered, would it be before I saw the comic help and her invariable swain (in a hat too small for him) ? My eyes would soon be gladdened by the kindly storekeeper gently rocking on his porch, by the world-famous profile worn (in this picture) by a young millionaire from Harvard passing his vacation *incognito* as a farm-hand, and the pursed lips and narrow eyes of those familiar and attenuated figures who would disapprove in corners of my . . . But I forgot ; for I was not the heroine.

Yet the small town was there, plain as its tank, for any student of the films to recognise. Perhaps the young man,

who drove me from the station and assured me in his jolting Ford (it jolted exactly as they did in movies) that I should find "our community hotel" as good as home, mistook me for the heroine. He may, indeed, have been the hero ; for his driving was noticeably amateurish. But after that the bright illusion faded. There were no comic loafers ; no village prudes whispered in sewing-circles. For small towns in Michigan are not all that Hollywood supposes.

The disappointment passed. But as it died, the traveller was left reflecting on the sad incapacity of art to render nature. That, however, is a large general question ; and travellers have little time for general questions. But how far, I wondered, is one particular form of art clouding our minds by persistently misrepresenting life in the United States ? Graver pens than mine were already busy with the larger grievance that films are hopelessly misleading to thoughtful orientals ; that the white man's darling prestige suffers beyond repair from nightly demonstrations on the screen that State Attorneys have their lapses or that forgers possess hearts of gold ; and that East and West can hardly hope to meet, so long as one of the two is left under the impression that white men are mainly occupied in bank robberies, surreptitious courtship, and reprieves. It may be so. It is just possible that Mr. Eugene Chen has vowed himself to the destruction of those unyielding capitalists in white waistcoats who give large parties in the conservatory just to show how rich they are, and that the vamp, her sex's dark reproach, supplies its main motive-power to Swaraj. I doubt it, though. But what I do not doubt is that the films have become, for good or evil (mostly, I think, for evil) the main interpreters of the United States to an interested outer world. We have all learnt America in picture theatres, and it is distinctly unfortunate that we have learnt it wrong.

It is a genuine misfortune, since international understandings rest upon international knowledge ; and so long as movie magicians evoke their Djinns and Afrits from enchanted bottles in Southern California, one can hardly

hope to know the United States. One enterprising industry persists in circulating a delirious travesty ; and if America is misjudged, it has only its own enterprise to blame. That, perhaps, is the vengeance of Heaven upon the block-booking system.

One was left wondering if other forms of art are equally misleading about other countries. Is our own conscience clear ? What wells of information do we offer to interested strangers ? Looking back from Michigan towards Europe, I could see those homely shores transfigured through a rich haze of opera. One might (in Michigan) be pardoned for concluding that European life consisted mainly of musical processions, in which baritone kings are led out to coronation in canvas cathedrals, or village revels where a singing peasantry carouses from paste-board cups. That is the Continent, of course ; and it is notorious that almost anything may happen on the Continent, though I have never found a strong Wagnerian element in German life, and storms in Switzerland are strikingly unlike Rossini's. But is our own country any better served ? There is always Shakespeare ; and a sudden fear assailed me that the Bard provides a rich mine of misconceptions for the transatlantic student. There are other sources, too, in all of which the English scene is obstinately "old-world." Are these the springs at which America drinks knowledge of Great Britain ? If so, there is much to be forgiven—even to Big Bill Thompson. For in the travesties that we export there are so many courtiers ; monarchs abound ; and can we hope to be wholly understood, if we persistently export a picture of British life in which Shakespearean kings move perpetually through a landscape of velvet lawns and moated granges ? Does the visitor from Michigan experience, at the sight of bowler-hatted crowds fighting for seats on omnibuses, just such disillusionments as beset me in his home-town ? If so, art is the very worst of all ambassadors ; and two continents, known to each other through the movies and Grand Opera, respectively, can never hope to meet.

7. The Haunted Desert

Half Cumbrian, half Pyrencean, powdered with the last spring snows, the Rockies keep their watch between the Great Plains and the sea. But they were behind us now, and we rolled steadily across a landscape almost entirely composed of pure geology. For the night had wrought a strange transformation. Ourselves were wholly unchanged. We were all there—the patient traveller, the fretful child in Number 8 and her indifferent mother, and the large gentleman from Denver with a Kiwani emblem in his buttonhole and an unquenchable belief in Buicks for all wayfaring emergencies (enumerated one by one and dwelt upon with loving detail). George, the generic Pullman porter, slept in attitudes of infantile *abandon* or engaged in endless disputations with a visiting colleague—George no less—from the next coach that rumbled with dignity in front of us under the preposterous surname of Begonia (our own was Myosotis). A hopeless vendor still did his best in face of every discouragement to tempt us with candies from the town behind or papers from the town in front; and each of us repelled his advances after our own fashion—the traveller by reading French to show that he was European and therefore immune from such desires, the gentleman from Denver by an uninterrupted flow of narrative. Someone was peeling oranges. For the night had left us quite unchanged; and our little caravan rolled on, an island of indifference, across the changing landscape.

All its contours were lower now. The rich profusion of geology, which would have drawn tears of gratitude from Professor Tyndall, was sinking fast; and no more self-explanatory hills exhibited their strata. The heights were now unlikely hummocks that stirred a faint memory of Sheba's Breasts; and the levels held occasional pastures, where the green was dun and the dun reddish. So we rolled endlessly behind the dreary clangour of our locomotive's bell across the red distances of the desert. For the caravan still

rumbled on, traversing the long perspective in a reddish haze, and in the haze the pitiable recollection of Penzance, Arizona. What despairing Cornishman, dreaming of Truro, named this lodge in the wilderness? Did he hear the tide-rip off Land's End on baking nights, when the dust-devils danced before his porch and the hot wind from Mexico breathed across Arizona? He was so far from Looe and the little houses of Polperro. And yet a Cornishman might feel at home in the red desert. For Cornishmen, they say, are sometimes more than half Spanish; and the red desert has a Spanish look. Spain is never very far from the Santa Fé trail. It echoes in Manuelito and Las Vegas; there is a touch of it where the Fathers built their missions; and sometimes a tumbled skyline hints at the bare hills outside Toledo. One is left with an odd fancy that when Spain carried with her in her conquests her language, art, and religion, she took her landscape too.

So we rolled on across the desert. The gentleman from Denver, his passion for narrative temporarily assuaged, was sleeping; the fretful child, too tired even to complain, drooped inconsolably; and in the corner of the car George shifted his position to dream more easily of a Pullman porter's paradise, where there are no more beds to make and everyone is quite polite. Another caravan pants by and waves a hand from its rear platform. In front of us the rails stretch forward endlessly to California; behind they stream as endlessly beneath the observation-car; and on either side the indifferent desert offers its red distances to our unseeing windows. We have ceased to be a train crossing a landscape and are now a point moving across a map devoid of features. The eye, with nothing to look at, becomes unutterably tired. Even the shimmering delusion of mirage scarcely amuses it. For the prospect is as dull as the world before Creation, a void punctuated at regular intervals by the monotony of telegraph poles.

But the desert is not always empty. Sometimes, a little after sundown, it has a haunted look, an air of frequentation

that makes one glad to be in a lit train moving away from it towards the lights of cities. As the day dies, its colour falls from red to grey, from grey to lavender, and from lavender to a dead alkaline white. Smoky rainstorms hang about its edge. A scurf of desert vegetation streams by the moving windows ; and the light fades behind a ridge of hills that seem to owe their tortured outline to long and conscientious study of Doré. A slow storm climbs up the sky like a moving darkness ; and in the little wind that runs before it the piñons wave their lovely arms. One feels that in a little while, when darkness falls, they will not be so lonely. For something seems invisibly assembling in the desert. Even the telegraph poles are almost spectral now ; and the air is full of evil. For as the night shuts down, the desert is not always empty.

8. Santa Clara

"Des pruneaux encore ! . . . Jamais de la vie ! "

TARTARIN SUR LES ALPES.

They say that prunes are unromantic. But for me, after that morning, they will always wear the authentic colour of romance.

We woke on *terra firma*. It was not for once the gently undulating deck of the west-bound Limited, whose depressing bell had been my intermittent lullaby nights out of number. The waking eye, accustomed to discouraging encounters with its owner's coat sheeted sepulchrally and swinging slightly on a Pullman hook, incredulously recognised the ampler comforts of a fixed edifice, and closed again. They were still there when it reopened ; and it ranged in happy recognition over a solid spaciousness unknown even to west-bound trains. Such, perhaps, were the rare moments of felicity snatched by the Flying Dutchman, when in port for brief, forbidden spells. For the waking sleeper lay, beyond all controversy, in a bed ; the bed (so much was plain without undue exertion) stood in a room ; his things were scattered round on chairs ; there were even tables ; drawn curtains hinted at windows ; and, perhaps, behind

the curtain there were views—views that would positively stand still to be looked at, instead of sliding irritatingly past the pane behind an awkward file of telegraph poles, the unvarying foreground of all railway landscapes. But for a time a more immediate foreground claimed him, where his bed was barred with breakfast—breakfast with marmalade, the ultimate perfection of American hospitality to a British guest. The view could wait.

It waited. But ultimately it could wait no longer. Something invisible behind the curtains called. A faint, isolated note or two of its call was audible in the narrow strip of sunlight just below the window. It must be very light out there ; and for a while one lay, vaguely contented by the thought of how light it must be outside and how kind it was of them to send up marmalade for breakfast. But bed, even post-prandial bed, cannot last for ever. The strip of sunlight on the floor grew more appealing every moment ; bare feet met the carpet ; an arm threw back the curtains ; and California flooded in.

The room was full of sunlight now. But who could look behind ? A sunlit garden lay below, flowered to distraction, where the tall cypresses, its pacing sentries, had paused to admire their shadows ; and its colours melted in the soft Pacific light. That was the foreground. Far away a line of mountains met the sky, their hollows filled with morning shadows and their heights (but did I not promise half California that I would keep their shameful secret ?) still flecked with snow. It was the Coast Range, standing up ten miles away to take the morning ; and it stood like a wall behind the picture. But the broad canvas flowed more easily towards its background. For, right and left, an open valley spread straight from the window to the distant foot-hills. Half-way, in the middle distance, the Guadalupe flowed between its sycamores across the picture. But there was something odd about that plain. Plains should be green, especially sunlit plains in spring-time. It was a sea of orchards ; and those level waves seemed green at first—

green, if a trifle pale. But as one looked, they paled still further, fading perceptibly from greenish till they blanched into white. For the whole plain was dusted white with plum-blossom ; and that incredible valley-floor was carpeted with plums—with (why Burke it ?) prunes. So, for me, after that morning prunes will always wear the authentic colour of romance.

To meet the Santa Clara Valley suddenly in flower is something beyond the grasp of adjectives and the rich eloquence of railway folders. It is not easy, perhaps it is scarcely possible, to evoke that sunlit picture. Yet if M. Anatole France could believe one of the innumerable holy men with whom he consoled his own wistful unbelief, St. Clara had a well in Italy with power to bring back the past. For he saw in it the mirrored pictures of *Le Puits de Sainte Claire*. But, for me, it is a small and very gracious past that rises on the still waters of my well of Santa Clara—a long dinner-table buried in plum-blossom where Ireland sat serene and smiling, a path that wound up among the redwoods (with a wary eye for poison-ivy), and the still sunshine of California flooding a half-Italian garden in a white valley carpeted with magic prunes.

9. *Grand Canyon*

I attempt no description of this combat, knowing the unintelligibility and the repulsiveness of all attempts to communicate the Incommunicable.—CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM-EATER.

The formula is simple. Take the step-pyramid of Saqqara; stain it a dozen shades of red, from brick-dust to a dingy crimson ; lay on the colour in great sweeping stripes, five hundred feet from edge to edge and a half-mile across, until it looks like a mountain that has struggled into a giant's football jersey ; summon twenty of its fellows in similar attire ; set them to watch a river racing angrily a mile below their summits ; enclose the watching hills in a gorge a dozen miles across ; and you have, if words can render it, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. A wise *Opium-*

Eater once refrained from a description of the indescribable ; and he alone, perhaps, could render (as only opium could conceive) the ranged insanity of that demented landscape. Seen from the sheer edge of a cliff, where the hills of Arizona look nearly into Utah, it began and ended nowhere. That tormented pattern could surely not be final ; and one had a sudden uneasy feeling that earthquake had paused for an instant, that the writhing valley might resume its slow convulsions at any moment. It was a crowded valley ; for its floor rose up into odd, decapitated summits, where mad mountains groped for one another with discoloured buttresses. The eye was frankly scared—even the modern eye, which can look steadily at mountains ; and that disordered scene would have sent the Eighteenth Century, which shrank from their horrid grandeur, sobbing in panic to its bedroom. It had, as one looked down at it again, a queer, unfinished air, as of a Miltonic Chaos waiting for Creation. There was a total lack of meaning in its distorted features ; heaped table-lands looked down on nothing ; incredible *arêtes* led nowhere. Perhaps it was a storehouse of forgotten mountains, somehow mislaid among the hills. Yet one had a sense that something no less Miltonic had been at work there, carving the hollows, smoothing the steep escarpments, and squaring the mountain-sides. Something, perhaps, had built it in an evil mood to be a parody of Creation. Even where the blind cliffs offered their red, striated sides with fantastic hints of architecture, the resemblances were all pagan—Egyptian pylons riding on Hindu temples, the towers of Babylon crowned with pyramids, and *ziggurats* that ended in unlikely minarets. Somewhere below the rioting red hills an unseen river poured its rapids through a deep grey cleft ; and once its thin and angry whisper drifted up from where the Colorado River, sunk out of sight a mile below, raced roaring through the Canyon. There was no other sound ; cascades of silent stone lay in the sunlight, watching a slow dance of shadows across the red hillsides ; and thirteen miles away the forests of the farther rim ruled on the sky a line of level green.

GETTYSBURG

It had been snowing in the night, and the white roofs of Harrisburg looked positively Russian. But a friendly offer of the seventy mile drive was not to be refused, even though Gettysburg would be strikingly unlike Lee's battle-field that snowy morning. As the big car plunged forward and the blanched roads slipped underneath between the sheeted fields, it was not easy to believe that Maryland was only a dozen miles away. Secure behind the rugs, we seemed unspeakably remote from coons in cotton-fields. Yet Mason and Dixon's Line was over the next hill ; and, in the sloping fields between, the fate of Mason, Dixon, Line, cotton-fields, and coons had been determined in three days of intermittent gunfire and promiscuous gallantry.

We looked across the shrouded country and thought a trifle ruefully that it could hardly correspond that morning with the sunlit Seminary Ridge, Peach Orchard, Round Tops, and Wheatfield of '63. For Gettysburg had been a July battle ; and one should visit battle-fields, each under its appropriate sky—Waterloo at a rain-sodden midsummer ; Wagram (as once I did) in the breathless heat when the Viennese are gasping for *Eis-kaffee* and tree-shadows lie like tall pencils across the white Aspern-Essling road ; Culloden in raw Highland mist ; Sedan under a leaden sky ; and Metz in the still autumn days that watched Bazaine between the dripping trees, as the leaves fell and the last eagles of the Empire drooped miserably towards surrender. So it was not to be hoped that Gettysburg would wear its own aspect on that snowy February day.

But there were compensations. For the snow, which hid the ground, would hide the monuments as well. I speak without irreverence ; since reverence is rarely assisted by those sorrowing divinities and foot-soldiers shouting silently

in stone, with which the monumental art loves to embellish scenes of glory. Mounted generals raising perpetual bronze *képis* do not aid the fancy ; strained gunners (in bas-relief) are equally unhelpful ; and imagination frankly quails before the larger carnivora in post-prandial attitudes. On a deserted battle-field one gropes for echoes ; and a too noisy allegory may disturb the air. I was never nearer to the past, I think, than once in the silent valley that lies between the two smooth ridges of Valmy. Sculpture had admirably neglected her opportunities ; and I was perfectly alone, since the other sightseers, misled by an extremely small-scale map of Mr. Belloc's, had started in the wrong direction. But the ridge was there in the still sunshine, where the Republic faced the kings ; and there, confronting it, was the bare slope where the stiff Prussian infantry made their uncertain movements, and the green hollow in between where Goethe, most glorious of all war-correspondents, had walked under the noisy arch of that erratic barrage, reflecting that a new world was coming to birth—or so he remembered several years later, when it was considerably easier to be impressed by '92. It was quite silent when I walked there ; but the silent emptiness was filled with sound and movement—with Kellerman immensely plumed, Dumouriez looking a little anxious, and the crash as the fired caissons went up in smoke behind the startled French. For one can fill the void, where memory has space to spread its wings and no distractions step between the watcher and the past.

But crowded fields are harder to recover ; and Gettysburg is distinctly crowded. Piety has marked the post of every unit through the three days of fighting. Where the record consists of little field-guns, it aids the memory since they are the guns of '63 ; but in its other forms it almost seems to hinder. We can scarcely recall events that are so elaborately remembered for us. Thus may a predigested meal defeat digestion. Besides, the whole *Denkmälerei* effectively destroys the fine uncertainty of facts, to which alone dramatic happenings owe their drama. So as Pickett

advances on the predestined futility of the "High Water Mark Monument," his columns seem to move rather across the page of a text-book than across a field. Thus can commemoration paralyse our groping memory.

There is a wealth of sculptured effort; even the South has broken silence. And as I saw it draped in snow that morning with the white sheets drawn closely up to each military chin, it had an odd air of a drawing-room wrapped up with care for a long absence of its owners. Indeed, its owners were all absent—or very nearly all—sixty-four years away. So trim and decorous a place could not be haunted. But as I watched, it was still waiting in its sheets; and one day, perhaps, they will come again.

Yet something hung even on that winter air. There was a hint, above the bronze and marble and the neat winding walks, of a tall figure rising to half its height, a twist of paper crumpled in a bony hand, and then a dragging utterance—"Fourscore and seven years ago. . . ." For some speeches echo louder than a gun-shot.

THE PLATFORM

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid?"

"I'm going to the lecture, sir," she said.

OLD SONG.

How vividly it all comes back—the slight constraint that settles on the company, as lunch draws to a close ; the coffee ordered rather quickly and refused by the speaker with the feeble witticism that it might keep him awake ; one or two, prescient committee-members rising suddenly to “get good seats in front” ; a kindly introducer bearing down, full of consideration and his opening remarks, to ask the lecturer if he prefers to compose his thoughts in solitude (I always wondered how many of my predecessors had answered in the affirmative out of a base desire to impress—for there is something undeniably impressive in the thought of a lecturer alone in the presence of his Maker) ; and then the slightly uncertain journey down unfrequented corridors towards the back of the building, with a sudden view of the audience seen in profile, row after row, through a half-open door ; a dark stumble up the three—the invariable three—invisible steps that end upon the stage ; a blaze of lights ; the uncertainty which of two large, uncomfortable chairs to sit on ; a vague sea of faces ; and the scattered applause that greets arriving speakers.

These carefully recalled from the dim vaults of memory, compose the almost unchanging prelude of a lecture. There may, of course, be minor variations. Sometimes it was at night ; and then the opening scene is set at an unnaturally early dinner instead of lunch. Perhaps a friendly Faculty dined in a common-room ; but when rational men would settle down to talk their pipes away, the entertainment ends in the same constraint, the same dreadful consciousness of an impending lecture (for lectures, like tornadoes and

other convulsions of nature, are invariably preceded by an uncanny silence). Or a hospitable committee meets at a neighbouring hotel. The meeting, after the first embarrassment of introductions, is delightful ; but its close is shadowed by quick glances at watches, the furtive departure of an active secretary to "make sure that everything is all right," and the rapid journey of "two blocks"—always (I know not why) two blocks—with glimpses on the street of happy, happy people who are not going to the lecture.

But the lecturer, unhappy mortal, is always going to the lecture. No escape for him. Few can realise how deeply he envies those apologetic diners who rise at the coffee to explain, with copious regrets, that a previous and ineluctable engagement calls them to the opera or to a Philharmonic Concert. For in all well-ordered communities there is a Philharmonic Concert on the same evening as the lecture. I have arrived at the same moment in the same hotel as the performing orchestra itself, checked in between the second fiddle and the third trombone, and listened through an afternoon to their melodious exercises—the horn competing with the gay bassoon, each in his bedroom. So, after that rich foretaste of musical delights, when my embarrassed fellow-diners rose with apologies to pass their evening with Bach and César Franck, how I envied them. For the lecturer is condemned to pass his evenings with himself.

Yet he is not quite alone. For even lecturers have audiences ; and in their company the most industrious speaker may learn far more than he can ever hope to teach : he may even (I write in all humility) learn to speak. True, the opportunity is not invariably taken. For the lecture-platform overflows with Strong, Silent Men, faced with the apparently insoluble problem of keeping on talking for an hour and overcoming their invincible repugnance to articulate speech by the most desperate expedients. Some range about the platform like caged lions ; some hover insecurely on its very edge and alarm nervous occupants of front seats with the terrifying prospect of receiving a lecturer in their laps,

as well as in their minds ; and some bludgeon their hearers into a merciful unconsciousness with the studied brutality of a typewritten discourse heaped menacingly in front of them and diminishing as the pile of read manuscript grows—oh ! so slowly—under the reading-lamp. Being myself humane, I am always on the side of the audience. I hope that they will win. Have I not suffered agonies of suspense from learned men, whose speech was hopelessly impeded by their learning, as they incited drooping rows of listless hearers in a college lecture-room to “ come . . . mnyumm . . . to another aspect . . . mnyahh . . . of the problem . . . mnyum-mnyahh . . . ” ? Yet the audience at a public lecture is less deserving of our pity. It has only itself to blame : there was no need for them to come.

They have their reasons, though. For some (and these, I believe, compose the vast majority) have come to learn ; others, less to be respected, are there to see the speaker. They are the sightseers of literature, eager to view the inadequate little man or the imposing lady whose writings they have long enjoyed in private—and there is, I suppose, a certain satisfaction to be derived from watching a novelist with an output like Niagara struggling for his next word. The lecture-platform may, for all that I know, be the novel-reader’s revenge, a Freudian “ compensation ” for the deluge of the written word sought in the halting utterance of the lecturer. But if practice can make perfect, there is small excuse for any lecturers to remain inarticulate, when at last they turn their faces towards the comforting silence of home after the endless solo of a lecture-tour. For they will have travelled several thousand miles to the monotonous accompaniment of their own voices. That music will pursue them through every hour of their extremely crowded days, from their rising up to their lying down—and even there, perhaps, they will hear it answering the telephone to explain their deepest convictions in reply to journalistic questions. They will hear it lecturing, of course, in mornings, afternoons, and evenings. And between lectures they will catch its doubtful

melody at every meal where the company consists of more than six. For perfect hospitality seems to proceed upon the somewhat unsound assumption that lecturers like making speeches ; and they will have made them with the coffee at the end of every meal, with the solitary (and merciful) exception of breakfast in bed. For a lecturer will learn to dread the words “ We have with us to-day....” So he has no excuse for not knowing how to speak, when a whole continent unites to teach him.

But if he can keep his eyes as wide open as his mouth, he may learn a far more valuable lesson. For as he views the long procession of his hearers, all along the road from the Great Lakes to San Francisco, he is in the way of learning more than most travellers. The eager tourist in a new country can always see with a minimum of effort what are termed “ the sights.” Museums and picture-galleries fly open at his approach ; ruins offer themselves conveniently for his inspection ; cities expose their public buildings ; and legislative assemblies tempt his hearing with the delicious notes of their melodious proceedings. These lessons mastered, the industrious visitor may have secured a sound grasp of the externals of almost any nation. But the nation itself remains a mystery. The shopping crowds, the other people in the train, the worshippers in the cathedral are still as dark to him as if he had remained at home and read accounts of their mysterious and remote proceedings in the newspapers of his native country. He sees, of course, the hats they wear, the inexplicable clothes they buy ; he tastes the extraordinary food they eat. But their lives, their interests, their minds remain impenetrably closed to him. That is precisely where the lecturer gains his advantage. For as he moves about, commanded by the inexorable schedule of his engagements, he penetrates more deeply than any tourist, sees more than connoisseurs in picture-galleries, and secures a record unavailable to the most industrious Kodak. He may shirk “ the sights ” ; bad fortune (or good luck) may bring him to every museum ten minutes after

closing-time ; and the bolts of cathedral doors may shoot noisily in their rusty sockets as he approaches. But he has seen something far more instructive than mummies, Vermeers, or rood-lofts ; for he has seen the ordinary man, that most secretly preserved of national sights.

No stranger, of course, can ever see a nation, or even a tithe of one. But he may, if he is lucky, follow a route that cuts a section through a whole community and, if he is moderately observant, form some picture in his mind of the strata that lie on each side of his little mine-shaft. His journey, if sufficiently long and diversified, may well be such a shaft, sunk through the various layers that compose a nation. For it may take him (as mine took me) through the upper layers of the higher education, by way of each successive grade of university and school, to the most fascinating stratum of all, where the ordinary mortal, his education done, stands ranged in due order from the Eastern States to Texas, up into the North-West, and out to the Pacific. That is the finest stratum for the social geologist, if he keeps his eyes about him and his hammer ready for specimens. It is the truest form of sight-seeing that America can offer. For the leading " sight " of the United States is not the White House or the Grand Canyon, but the ordinary man.

The first discovery that any lecturer will make on this important topic is that the ordinary man is not the ordinary man at all—but the ordinary woman. For his hearers are, in a vast preponderance, feminine. Even his evening fixtures draw a distinct majority of women, though he is not himself a matinée idol or even a novelist announced to discourse on those topics of the heart, in which novelists are believed to enjoy a mysterious competence. Men will be there, of course, but only sparsely present—a shade apologetic in their air and in just sufficient numbers to relieve a nervous lecturer of the alarming exordium " Ladies " in favour of the more habitual " Ladies and gentlemen." Recalling all the rows of friendly faces that passed before a slightly embarrassed eye in its long pilgrimage from east to west, one is

confronted (like Don Juan in a memorable scene) with a vision of remembered ladies—though I hope their faces wear a less reproachful look. Memory gives back to me row after row of listeners, at all times of day and in every variety of climate. Sometimes the snow was deep outside ; sometimes the sun was shining with an irritating emphasis upon the absurdity of keeping folks indoors on such a day. There was an afternoon at Pasadena. . . . Halls varied ; there were cosy meeting-rooms, halls with deceptive echoes, vast theatres where a listless stage-hand flicked on the footlights, and one depressing auditorium, brownish in colour and admirably adapted for use between lectures as a morgue, but with a stage set by some divine ineptitude for a street-scene in *Romeo and Juliet*—I can still recall the sense of inadequacy with which the lecturer and his introducer shambled across that background of Verona in their black evening suits, the hunger for a cape to swing, and the unsatisfied craving for a sword. But one quality united all the listening rows in every hall : they were almost all feminine. One excludes colleges and schools, of course, where the attendance hardly counts in such a calculation for the cruel reason that it was—I blush to record—often compulsory. There remains that vast aggregate of audiences which were entirely feminine, because the occasion was organised by a Women's Club, and the mixed audiences at public lectures, where the men were hopelessly outnumbered.

One is left speculating on the significance of this odd balance of the sexes. Lectures are dull enough ; but they are surely not more forbidding to male than to female ears. Yet the indubitable fact remains that women come to them, while men remain away. I make no comment on the absence of the American male : we have been taught to think of him as deep in more absorbing occupations. Besides, I entertain no doubt that, given a similar occasion, the British male would be quite equally, if not more, absent. But, then, the lecture forms no part (or only an infinitesimal one) of the British scheme of things. One

would stare round-eyed at any subject of King George, aged more than twenty-one, who said in response to questions that he was "going to the lecture." And no attraction, however unusual or sublime, will suffice to get him there. The announcement of a course to be delivered by the Archangel Michael on his experiences in the Holy War—in the Albert Hall, of course (where else would an Archangel lecture?)—would almost certainly find him lecturing to empty benches. For England does not go to lectures. The British male would not be there. But neither would the British female. There lies the impressive contrast. For the multitudinous lecture-goers of America are almost all women.

It is a phenomenon worth analysing further. However ungallant it seems to pass one's hostesses under the microscope, one may pursue the investigation. Where do they live? What kind of people are they? If lecture-going were just a feature of small-town life, one would be inclined to discount its significance. For in small communities, where the stir is slight and the picture-houses only change their programmes once a week, anyone might be excused for going to a lecture. In such instances attendance would not point to anything more significant than a desire for change, a mild hope of entertainment sure to be rewarded by the sight of a strange face and the sound of a still stranger (because so often an English) voice. But the lecture, as a part of the life of American women, is by no means confined to small towns. I have seen eager assemblies in large cities richly provided with every means of distraction for their citizenesses. What, then, is the meaning of them?

One pauses, slightly baffled. Such assemblies consisted, in the experience of one explorer, of almost every type—young women fresh from college, ladies in middle life, and comfortable elders. Only one element was almost uniformly absent; for the presence of young mothers, deep in their household worries, was something of a rarity, though even that was not unknown. What, one is left enquiring, draws

them to the lecture ? I am half inclined to think that one factor, which Englishmen may be forgiven for overlooking, is the wide diffusion of university education in the United States. There are a little under six hundred (to be precise, 588) American universities and colleges, with a student population of approximately three-quarters of a million. This mass is not a stationary body ; but the stream, constantly renewed at the springs of each new generation, flows out steadily into the community. The men proceed into their various callings, and any appetite for information that college may have stirred is rapidly submerged in the new ardours of their necessary occupations. The law absorbs them ; real estate excites ; lumber and hardware exercise their faculties —until, when the long day is done, the male, for all his college training, has become the Weary Titan who demands an unexacting evening with his radio, a cross-word puzzle, or a musical play. But the college women ? Their fate is very different. For a year or so—longer, perhaps—they live at home unmarried. During this interval a lecture may reasonably appeal as a pleasant means of passing time away. There is still a vague desire to learn ; the lecture may lead somewhere new or may continue something half-learnt in college. That feeling, I think, accounts for the presence of one's younger hearers. Then comes marriage ; and the home performs for women the same absorbing functions as a man's profession. That is why men and young married women are so largely absent from the lecture-hall. But families, as time goes on, grow up ; the home ceases to be an all-absorbing occupation ; and the woman is left with leisure on her hands. That is the second stage at which the announcement of a lecture draws her. It seems to beckon with a faint memory of lessons half-learnt, ten, fifteen, or twenty years before. So she goes, unlike her husband, to the lecture, a willing victim of the lecture-habit.

A more delicate enquiry opens. What is the value of the habit ? Does the audience that comes bring anything

away? A lecturer may be excused for blushing slightly, before he faces that essential question. But the value of his performance does not depend entirely on himself. For it is necessarily restricted by the universal limitations of all lectures. An hour of talking gives him time to utter about eight thousand words—say, four and twenty pages. But the looser textures of the spoken word, with all its repetitions and its emphasis, compels a speaker to proceed far more leisurely than he would with his pen in hand. So his eight thousand words of lecture would probably compress, if written down for printing, into fifteen pages, which a reader could easily absorb in half an hour. So the lecture-audience is, in point of time, a loser. That is to say, it could acquire more knowledge in a shorter period if it stayed at home and read a book. But would it? That question embodies the main (and almost the sole) defence of lectures.

But the lecture is a comparatively worthless thing, if its effect is ended when the audience troops out and the lecturer goes back to his hotel. He may have uttered his eight thousand words and imparted his fifteen pages of information. But unless some, at least, of his hearers are inspired to read a little further on the subject, his effort has been largely wasted and he has been little more than a respectable distraction—a blameless movie or an innocuous play. For the lecture must, if it does its duty, serve as an incitement to reading; and if the more listless members of the audience employ it merely as a substitute, their time—as well as the lecturer's—has been very nearly wasted. That is the haunting fear which shadows every smiling figure that stands acknowledging the mild applause in which his lecture ends. It would be less, I think, if lecture-programmes were less richly diversified. For how can any speaker hope to set his hearers reading history by an hour's talk, if someone a week before has entertained them with “Child Life in Armenia” and they are to listen a week hence to “Bird-lore” with vocal imitations? But that problem is for lecture-com-

mittees to solve (with their diverse constituents to please), and not for lecturers. Those harassed mortals can only say their piece, listen to politely murmured thanks, sign copies of their published works, and slip away to their hotels—the Flying Dutchmen of contemporary education, commercial travellers of culture.

STATE LEGISLATURE

FIRST FLOOR : So wot could it was ?

SECOND FLOOR : Hmmm—wot could it wasn't ?

POPULAR CLASSIC.

THE war memorial in the square outside looked, at the first glance, a trifle overcrowded ; and, it must be confessed, that noble pedestal was distinctly populous. For its upper reaches were a joyous riot of allegory, where eagles soared and suspended ladies of heroic size made promiscuous awards of wreaths. Our kind conductor kindled the wildest hopes with his unwitting intimation that one of the figures wore "suspenders." That word, so innocent to American ears, is replete with dark significance for Europeans. Had some bronze Victory, we wondered breathlessly, adopted unusual precautions ? Was this a sculptural rarity, worthy to rank with the gold *pince-nez* worn for so many years by the late Friedrich Krupp (in bronze) outside the Yacht Club at Kiel ? Alas, it signified no more than that some victorious soldier on the lower tier wore braces : it seemed a wise precaution. For in that riotous procession of returning warriors anything might happen. Their home-coming was more than a little complicated, since it appeared on closer scrutiny that they had returned from four distinct (though almost equally victorious) wars a hundred years or so apart. For the City Fathers, with a wise economy reminiscent of that frugal village which combined its war memorial with the victims of a lifeboat accident, had amalgamated on one glorious pedestal all the battle-honours of the Republic. Each of its four appointed wars was there—the Revolutionary, war of 1812, Mexican, and Spanish-American. After this triumph of deft condensation it may be conjectured that they were left slightly baffled by the inexplicable malice of Providence in permitting a fifth war to burst

upon them in 1917. For one can hardly add a fifth side to a four-sided monument. So the civic mind was sadly bewildered by fresh problems of commemoration ; peristyles and pylons danced in imagination before its anxious eye ; and it was haunted by a doubt, due to a slight defect in its classical education, as to what one put inside a cenotaph.

But though we lingered in the shade of that stupendous cairn, the object of our quest was less æsthetic. Open hands had met us at the station with a kindly offer to fill our day for us ; and the afternoon, it seemed, was to be filled with the State Legislature, that august *revenant* which appeared within its marble halls once in two years and legislated for six delirious weeks. Since it legislated for thirty thousand square miles of farming land, about a quarter of the size of France, we were prepared to see it with respect. Besides, it was State of spirit. Had not a sprightly leader-writer in a neighbouring city observed that it was "proud because it has a governor in the penitentiary . . . It also has Wiz Stephenson of the Klan in there and has walled him in as tight as possible." So we approached its Areopagus with due respect, walking delicately over the chess-board marble of its outer courts.

The House was in a gentle buzz of session. To eyes accustomed to the ranked adversaries of Westminster or the horse-shoe sweep of Continental Chambers, there is inevitably something a little unimpressive in those legislatures where all the members face in the same direction, sitting at little desks. For the arrangement lends to the most adult Parliaments an unexpected air of the schoolroom ; one almost looks along the file of bowed shoulders for a black-board, and half expects someone to come in and give them a half-holiday. That afternoon, however, work was in full swing. A mildly conversational assembly was legislating, at the rate of about a Bill every sixth minute, for its three million subjects. One had a sudden vision of the beneficiaries of this legislative energy—of the local lawyer noting

up his law-books at fevered speed, the local administrator overloading his congested margins with a tangled fringe of novel duties, the local policeman staring at the mounting spate of his fresh functions in dazed policeman's admiration. Slightly dazed ourselves and deeply admiring, we were led up to Mr. Speaker, who faced the assembly from his dais. A gracious hand waved two astonished visitors to seats beside the throne ; and seen from that comfortable vantage-point, the stream of legislation flowed swiftly past. Soothed by the incomparable lullaby of eloquence, we suspected nothing. There was a sudden pause, provoked by Mr. Speaker's hammer soundly rapped on the stone slab in front of him, as he invited the assembly to " meet " the young ladies of some inaudible academy, present at their deliberations. A sudden fringe of heads appeared along the rim of a distant gallery ; and the assembly rose and " met " them. We were still unsuspecting, when he beat his slab again and asked the House—to our increasing horror—to " meet " the unworthiest of its spectators. That nervous auditor, having observed the ritual, arose ; and a courtly Legislature rose with him. But when he hoped to sit again, the Speaker's whisper in his startled ear directed him to speak. As flight was shameful, he remained—and spoke. But the full terrors of a Legislature's hospitality were still unsuspected. For the Speaker rose once more and, indicating that their guest from England had a wife, invited the assembly to " meet " her also. Once more the alarming rustle of legislators rising politely to their feet ; once more the spectacle of an embarrassed guest smiling uncertainly from the dais, as she " met " her hosts. Still insatiable, Mr. Speaker demanded one speech more ; and since Speakers must be obeyed even by lady visitors, speech was forthcoming. A member covered the family confusion with a word of charming welcome introducing, by way of figurative ornament, one of the pigeons which flapped unaccountably about the hall and was momentarily dignified, for symbolic purposes, as the authentic Dove of Peace. The incident was

closed, recorded duly in the Minutes of that august assembly. Such are the happy dangers that lie in wait for rash visitors to Legislatures. A notice might, possibly, be posted in the hall to warn them. But then we should have missed a happy meeting.

THE UNMELTING POT

THE preacher's text is large and printed in bold characters between the rank air of the stockyards and the steely purity of Lake Michigan. And the sermon ? Let us be clear about it. This is not a reasoned appraisal (with race-maps and statistical appendices) of the race-problem in the United States. To solve that—and it is solved, on an average, four times a week—would be to write the last word upon the American past, present, and future ; and last words in history are not written by sensible historians. The golden rule, as Mr. Chesterton observed in a rare lapse from the dogmatic, is that there is no golden rule. A wise Emperor once restrained an impulsive minister with the sage remark, "*En politique il ne faut jamais dire, ‘Jamais’*" ; and students of the United States might well observe the caution. For in America anything may happen. So why speculate about it ? A cool agnosticism is by far the safer course. Avoid decided views, and you may be able to face posterity with a bland "I told you so !" But thought cannot be altogether silenced by these unheroic counsels. Besides, it is dull (as well as draughty) to keep an open mind. So hurried travellers rush in where natives fear to tread ; and a random drive from the Loop to Cicero and back again may well provoke random reflections. These, then, are offered with all due reserve ; inset, a portrait of Chicago.

That daughter of the West sits, if so stationary a verb is applicable to her pose, beside her slightly inadequate river and looks out across fifty miles of lake, while the north wind comes swooping down from Canada four hundred miles away. Her poets, as perverse as poets in gentler climates, linger affectionately on her smoke. They love to grime their goddess and to put smuts on her nose. So the scared traveller had half expected some stupendous lake-side

Stoke-on-Trent, barely visible beneath its smoke and lit by the intermittent glare of blast-furnaces. But one can see now that the legend of Chicago's murk was a mere repartee. For New York is universally believed to be extremely light and Chicago is nothing if not different. Truth must be told, although one would not willingly hurt a single feeling on Michigan Avenue (or even in the City Hall) ; and it must be confessed with grave reluctance that west-bound trains draw into a tall city, full of light.

There is a difference, though. For the visitor is nowhere haunted in Chicago by those echoes of somewhere else that stir his memories of Europe in certain American cities. There is no note of Paris in the Chicago air, no hint of England ; since that robust child does not "take after" any of its highly numerous parents. Perhaps she is a little too much the *fille du régiment*. The city looks, indeed, towards the seat ; but when Chicago looks eastwards, it looks across Lake Michigan, not (Mayor Thompson will agree) across the Atlantic. For here is an American city that is just trying, trying hard, and even trying sometimes a little truculently, to be an American city. And how admirably it succeeds. Even civic pride may be forgiven its worst excesses, when it has something to be proud of ; and what citizen could walk between the shop-fronts of Michigan Avenue and his gleaming lake without a sinful pride ? That, surely, is a half-street worthy to stand in the choice company of the world's half-streets—with King's Parade, and Piccadilly urbanely overlooking its Park, and Princes Street where Edinburgh Castle stares grimly down into the shop-windows. There is no need to swagger about Michigan Avenue ; for that stately profile easily compels the praises it deserves.

The tall façades along the lake seem to look nobly out to sea across the intervening ash-heaps. One was a little puzzled by that sudden interlude of ugliness between the calm and regular features of the boulevard and the bright splendour of the lake. For a No Man's Land of holes and heaps and rubbish intrudes, like a line of dust-bins between

a sumptuous auditorium and a lit stage ; and visitors are pardonably baffled by that devastated area, by the protracted and not yet successful efforts of the gigantic daughter of the West to complete her toilet. One was a shade embarrassed by the encounter, as though a nervous traveller should come on a large (and undeniably attractive) young woman doing her hair up in the corridor, her lovely mouth still full of pins. Here is a city that can erect an office-building forty storeys high in three months. Yet its lake-front, the brightest jewel in its civic crown, remains a wilderness of stone-heaps. One hates to feel (but what other answer is there ?) that private profit can move mountains, while public works wander uncertainly through a labyrinth of railway-franchises and municipal contracts.

But there are consolations. For official ingenuity has found a way to gratify the sense of beauty without undue exertion or expense. Along the scarred and battered front, that is sometimes more reminiscent of bombardment than of town-planning, a line of bill-boards announces the projected embellishments on the simple principles of Elizabethan scenery. One had seen actors in unduly scholarly revivals vainly endeavouring to perform with dignity before a clothes-horse simply ticketed "This is a castle"; and the same chaste expedient compels Chicago to trail its incomparable robes of beauty across a stage where, in default of other scenery, we read "This is a foot-bridge." Hardly just to a sublime performance, the device applies the principles of M. Coué to town-planning and might, with advantage, be employed in other contexts. For how deep our thanks, if memorial committees were to hold their pious hands and substitute for unlovely heroes prancing on unlikely steeds a simple notice-board bearing the chaste inscription "This is General Bloggs."

But larger questions lie behind the regular beauty of Chicago's lake-side profile. For the whole riddle of the American future is asked (though scarcely answered) by the alien litter of Maxwell Street. What is the eventual

meaning of those hundred thousand Poles, these streets alive with the -aks and -eks of exiled Bohemia, the sleek Italians, the demure and polysyllabic Greeks, and the solid half-million Germans? Here, within the city limits, is the second Czech, third Swedish and Norwegian, fourth Polish, and fifth German city in the world. It prints newspapers in a dozen languages and worships God in twenty. One thing is obvious: the fabled melting-pot is not yet heated to a point at which the elements consent to fuse. For in Chicago, if the evidence of the streets may be believed, the Pole is still a Pole, the Czech remains a Czech, and the Croat no less a Croat than on the day he passed the Ellis Island turnstiles. If this is a fair sample of the American *mélange*, Europe is not yet blended, though the multiple ingredients of that stupendous broth lie scattered in hopeful disarray on the kitchen table.

One odd result has followed. For though the amalgam is not yet constituted, some chemical action has taken place within the various elements. It is, in one aspect, disturbing; since transplantation seems to have changed certain, at least, of the European breeds—and hardly for the better. One should not overrate the crime-wave. Yet it is barely possible to read the papers or to see a slant-eyed, brownish-yellow house-front in Cicero, freshly sprayed with machine-gun bullets, without an odd reflection that the Italian as we know him seems strangely different from the "Wop" encountered by the American police. Harmless in London, mildly addicted to the knife and *crime passionnel* at home, he soars in the bright American air to novel heights of wickedness. What is the cause? One wonders whether wide economic opportunity is not too much for weak European characters. Or can it be the climate? After all, it was on this spirited continent that our blameless Nonconformity flowered unforgettably into Salt Lake City. I can do no more than indicate the riddle—and ask policemen in Soho if they could recognise their dark and smiling friends in the Italian gangsters of an American city. For the alien,

it seems, is often strangely corrupted in the new country of his choice. Perhaps he wants to be : that may be why he goes there.

But one would be wrong to see Chicago only as a vast alien welter. For, "gigantic, wilful, young," she is nothing if not American, a young relation of Walt Whitman. That authentic note may be heard more clearly here than anywhere in the United States. New York seems almost Parisian by comparison ; looked at from Illinois, Boston seems a cathedral town and New Orleans a Franco-Spanish port. So Mayor Thompson knew his business when he chose to fight a municipal election on the far from municipal slogan, "America First." Mayor Thompson is, indeed, a portent. His more apologetic countrymen tend to wave him aside as something unfit for foreign eyes ; but they cannot altogether explain him away. Here is a fantastic booster in a cowboy's hat who swept into office in the second city of the Union by a majority of more than eighty thousand votes. The issues were mainly irrelevant ; the causes I leave to local scientists to explain, merely appending (in mute awe) the ecstatic diagnosis of one supporter :

"His election is a clear victory for the candidate of the people. Highbrows and lowbrows alike were hostile. Thompson lost in the silk-stocking districts and in the famous First Ward, controlled by 'Bath-house John' Coughlin and 'Hinky Dink' McKenna. He won by the vote of the average citizen, whose Mayor he proposes to be."

A profounder student drew the more interesting conclusion that his victory was due to the assertive patriotism of the new ex-alien Americans, resentful of "the idea which is popular among the older Americans that they, the newcomers, are in some way inferior as patriots to their precursors." An outside observer cannot pretend to judge in such a question. But, for him, Mr. Thompson has a unique value as a flamboyant emblem of Americanism. His language alone is full of lessons for the thoughtful researcher. For wishing to convey that he was hostile to the enforcement

of Prohibition by domiciliary visits, he exclaimed in the barely credible idiom that seems habitual with him on the platform : " I'll fire any cop who walks into a man's house without a warrant and fans the mattress for a pint flask." And again, " I'll break any cop I catch on the trail of a lonesome pint into a man's house or car." Another issue (of his own raising) involved denunciations of his predecessor's Superintendent of Schools for the introduction of pro-British text-books ; and this indignant tribune of an outraged people, after calling that official " the stool-pigeon of King George," promised vociferously to " make the King of England keep his snoot out of America," promised indeed to " hand King George one on the snoot," should he forget himself so far as to intrude. For even Mayor Thompson's language has declared its independence of the King's English.

One would not cull these flowers out of pure light-heartedness. But Mr. Thompson's mind and utterance is too fine a specimen to overlook. One does not judge a garden by its rankest flower ; neither does one omit it. Besides, his appeal, judging by the response, was popular. For he came first in the affections of this singularly impressive city by 83,072 votes. Should such a phenomenon be entirely omitted ? The result, full of despair for what one commentator termed " the whither-are-we-drifting boys," is not entirely cheerless for the American future ; since it seemed to indicate that the motley masses of Chicago are even now sufficiently American to react to a thoroughly American stimulus. And no less American was the response of his defeated rivals. I append, as a *document pour servir*, the rejoinder made by a great journal to the universal derision which the result excited outside Chicago. Printed as its first leading-article by the *Chicago Tribune*, it bore the slightly rueful heading :

" AND SO'S YOUR OLD MAN

' If there was any part of Chicago that was not dominated by the bootleggers, thieves, thugs and dregs of the under-

world,' says the *Flathead Monitor* of Kalispell, Mont., 'that section must now capitulate with the election.' 'Why this "popular uprising" against good government?' asks the *New York Times*. 'Shades of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah,' says the *Astoria Budget* of Astoria, Ore., 'of imperial Rome, of Paris when voluptuaries reigned! The Chicago of 1927 fades them all in wickedness and rottenness.'

'Other cities,' says the *Topeka Daily Capital*, 'can be thankful they are not as the people of Chicago.' 'The whole campaign took on the semblance of a large group of thugs endeavouring to choose a leader,' says the *Fargo, N.D., Forum*. 'Not creditable to the intelligence of the Chicagoans,' says the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. 'Shows an undue prevalence of saps,' says the *Wichita Beacon*. 'Shames and disgraces the second largest city in the United States,' says the *Lincoln, Neb., Star*. 'An accurate reflection of the mind of a city which would sacrifice the interests of half the nation to keep its own tax rate down,' says the *Detroit News*. 'The spirit of lawlessness infects Chicago like a disease,' says the *Vancouver Sun*. 'Chicago seems to like it,' says the *Baltimore Sun*. 'Causes little surprise, but a good deal of regret outside that city,' says the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

'Chicago's rum runners, bootleggers, blind pig-keepers, and the whole kit and bilin' of contrabandists from the whisky moguls and beer bandits to the alley barkeeps, make up a rather exclusive guild of the traffic,' says the *Fort Wayne Journal*. 'They have the run of the town if they do not actually run the town.'

'And so's your old man,' says the *Chicago Tribune*.

In the American family of cities and commonwealths, Chicago does not feel itself a stranger. It is at home. Occasionally it exchanges gunmen with New York or Boston or gets a safe blower from Omaha. It does not see much that is unfamiliar at home or elsewhere. It gets some hard eggs from the Minnesota and Wisconsin's woods, and some from down the Mississippi. It sends some out.

Its electorate is about the electorate of any other American city. Slice it down and it would make Cleveland, Philadelphia, Birmingham, San Francisco, San Antonio, or Boston. Slice it further and it would make Columbus, O., or Yellow

Springs, Emporia, Kas., or Red Dog, Sioux City, or Painted Post, Plymouth, East St. Louis, Little Rock, Baltimore, or Salem.

We might put Honey Fitz and Sweet Adeline in the city hall, but it was Boston that did. New York turned down Mitchell for Hylan and Hylan for Singing Jimmie Walker, and continues to exist even with Singing Jimmie crashing the gate with his gang and taking the ringside seats for which the patient citizenship has paid its good money.

Indiana is proud because it has a governor in the penitentiary and Illinois hasn't. It also has Wiz Stephenson of the klan in there and has walled him in as tight as possible, fearing that he'll slip some information out which will make everybody uncomfortable. The Marion county grand jury has been discharged of duty in the klan investigation because the less any one learns of these matters the easier many citizens may sleep.

Philadelphia would count it a perfection of municipal reform if it could get anything but a stack of cinders to show what had been done on street paving within a measurable period of years after the assessments had all been paid.

We might elect Cole Blease to the United States senate, but we haven't. We merely elected Smith. We might have sent Hefling there, but again it was only Smith. We are not responsible for Tom Blanton in congress.

We have not elected Ma and Pa Ferguson, Pa first and then Ma after Pa had lost his citizenship because of the conduct of his office. That is a Texas contribution to the sanity of democracy. Maybe we've done no better or worse, but a citizen of Illinois and a citizen of Texas could shake hands in perfect understanding and sympathy. We weren't accountable for Magnus Johnson, the amiable eccentric of Minnesota. All we ever did for Ekhern, the former attorney-general of Wisconsin, was to give him desk room and some law practice.

We may have held our own with Tweed on one side and Sockless Jerry Simpson on the other, from their times down to the present, but for the most part it is about a piece off the same bolt of goods. This is the great American democracy, stepping high, wide, and handsome.

The pot and the kettle are playmates. Let's all get chummy again within the happy family."

That genial survey of local government throughout the Union may not be irrefutable ; but it is not uninstructive. For the *Chicago Tribune* speaks, not for Mayor Thompson, but for Chicago, seated beside the dancing beauty of her lake and trying—sometimes a little truculently—to be an American city.

MASON AND DIXON LINE

ONCE more, this is no treatise. Treatises abound. So why write another? Besides, a wise observer does not reach conclusions after three months of observation. His stay has been too long for that.

For he may dogmatise with freedom and precision on almost any subject in his first three days ashore. The first coloured men that he sees through a cab window on Washington Street, as he comes off the New York dock, will fill him with sage and final judgments; an evening under careful shepherding in Harlem completes his grasp of the whole problem; and after eight minutes' conversation with a Pullman porter he is prepared to solve it—with a few words to California on Japanese immigration thrown in by way of makeweight. But when the first fine flush has passed, he is less prodigal of his conclusions. Three months is just too long a sojourn for omniscience; since it teaches the traveller enough to see the outline of the problem, but not enough to solve it. Three days—or thirty years—is the right length of residence for persons ambitious to increase the sum of human wisdom on the Negro question. And then they get it wrong.

The judicious visitor will see it rather as the prime ingredient of American romance. If he is wise, indeed, he will welcome it in that picturesque capacity. For so many of his other expectations fail him. There are no buffaloes (except on nickels); palefaces walk around unscalped; and the red man has left his prairies to take refuge in museums or ill-fitting reach-me-downs. But though romance has faded with the wigwam and the thundering herd, Rastus remains—and Rastus (I name him affectionately, and without disrespect) is something. Romance, that most elusive Grail sought by all travellers, resides (I think) in a

sense of being somewhere different from home. The citizen of Cedar Rapids, Ia., secures it at Palermo ; Dodge Centre, Minn., may taste it in Madrid ; and residents of Fort Wayne, Ind., might, I believe, experience the feeling anywhere. But it visits the Englishman in America most strongly when a soft-spoken, smiling presence reminds him a dozen times a day (or all day long, if he is in the train) that he is on a fresh continent, and that continent the home of *Uncle Tom*—and Harper's Ferry.

One traveller can still recover the authentic thrill of American romance from his first sight of the Kentucky shore lying in big, green folds beyond the Ohio, as a car spun him out of Cincinnati. Romance had not been noticeably present that day. For he had travelled hurriedly from Michigan overnight, dispensed the customary omniscience to reporters in a hotel bedroom, shaved, lunched, and lectured ; and now, rescued by kindly hands, he was looking lazily out of the car windows and savouring the unaccustomed pleasure of fresh air. But there, beyond the rich curves of the river, lay Kentucky with the road to romance. He was half-way to Alabama ; and as he stared across the Ohio, the eager traveller looked into Dixie.

I often feel that the American pen errs slightly in its treatment of Negro romance. The excited Muse of Mr. Vachell Lindsay insists that we shall see the big, black bulk of Africa behind the cotton-fields. His ear is always open for the throb of homicidal drums. Mine, I confess, prefers the banjo, since Afro-America has its own voice ; and so long as half the white world is content (as it now seems to be) to lie under its spell, there is little need to analyse that haunting melody for problematic hints of a less pleasing atavism. I caught it once on a by-road in Texas. The night was rather dark, and a broad bar of light lay clear across the road from the half-open door of a little church. Someone proposed that we should go in and see the worship. But I know of no excuse for treating any congregation, however hospitable, as a raree-show. So we sat quiet in

the car outside and listened, just beyond the belt of yellow light. There were a few stars in the night sky, and our ears were sharpened by the darkness. But there was little need to strain. For the small chapel rocked and rang with the gay reiteration. Pounding feet drove the lilt home, as the whole congregation swung to a single rhythm, proclaiming in exultant repetition that they were "*coming*, Lord, I'm coming ; yes, I'm *coming*, Lord, I'm coming. For I'm *coming*. . . ." They were clapping now ; and the struck hands kept time to the lilting chorus and the drumming feet, except when an excited voice came in just ahead of the beat. That was the authentic note of the cotton belt. In another form it croons on saxophones, thuds intoxicatingly on the trap-drum, sets the whole modern world astir with the latest undulation of the dance, and then goes home to prance a domestic cake-walk. Need we pursue its ancestry up the dark forest paths, where the witch-dancers sway and the drums throb for sacrifice ? Such research as Mr. Lindsay's would detect the Hun beneath the Hungarian and catch a distant gleam of Attila's wild rider in the *Rhapsodie Hongroise*. After all, Stonehenge was one of Dr. Johnson's antecedents ; but no one has ever thought of searching *Rasselas* for signs of human sacrifice.

No less unfortunate, I feel, is the tendency manifested by one accomplished man of letters to treat the Negro as a fantastic tit-bit, as what Mr. Ezra Pound once denominated "*a spécialité*," as, in fine, a species of literary *delicatessen*. Since I am no divine, I would not dare to question the theology of *Nigger Heaven*. But I prefer to view the Negro more broadly in his American surroundings. Dismissing his ancestry and his secret thoughts, I accept him gratefully as a romantic figure on the American scene. Browning once dated European romance from an age

When red and blue were indeed red and blue.

American romance must wear, for me, a darker colour.

So I was duly grateful, whenever a spectacled darkey with

grey wool carried my baggage to a train. It was, I felt, the next best thing to an emotional encounter with a coal-black mammy. For me, the thrill was identical with that afforded to any American abroad by a glimpse of Tudor brick cushioned sedately on shaved lawns—that sudden, exquisite sense of butlers and ancestry. Each time the Pullman porter brushed me with his ineffectual brush, I too was favoured with a sense of butlers and ancestry—of faithful, coloured butlers and Virginian ancestry. It is a wonderful sensation : I know now why tourists troop to Haddon Hall. Besides, there was a solid reason for welcoming the association. For on a continent that rings, from Sandy Hook to Oakland, with vociferous professions of "service," the Pullman porter represents, so far as I know, the nearest approach to service in any European sense. He is not servile ; but he somehow manages to serve. So does his colleague in the dining-car. Those iridescent smiles above white and blue tunics remain, for me, the brightest feature of American travel. Frankly alarmed by Japanese, I wither in the presence of Swedish chambermaids and Croatian "helps," impregnably entrenched behind an unknown (and unknowable) language. Czech tailors paralyse my orders ; and the Rumanian, who took my photograph at a 10-cent store in Kansas City, broke all his promises with impunity, since I dared not reproach him. But with the Pullman porter I am a man and—if he will permit the *cliché*—a brother. I can tell him what to do. True, he does not always do it. I know his faults. Did he not do his best to leave my baggage on a siding at Bakersfield and send me naked into the Mojave Desert ? But I could, at least, explain the omission in language that he (and nearly all the bystanders) understood. For the Pullman porter is among the rare English-speaking elements that the explorer of the United States will encounter. The English-Speaking Union might, I think, do worse than give attention to his peculiar value for their work of drawing closer the two nations afflicted by that common (and rarely mastered) tongue ; for

there are moments when their nationals must feel extremely lonely in the United States. I am prepared to defend the Pullman porter against all comers. I know (nor do I underrate) his value to narrators of comic stories. Film-producers could hardly live without his exaggerated caution in face of non-existent dangers. But I affirm my perfect loyalty to him. Since all Pullman porters are called "George," Mayor Thompson of Chicago will suspect that, as a subject of King George, I owe it merely to his name.

I owe it rather to romance, to a deep gratitude that here, at last, on the whole shifting continent there is just one survival. He gratifies a European's sense (how sorely starved) of the past, as much as any Gothic ruin tickles a New World palate. Rastus remains. Indeed, I am not sure whether something of equal historic interest does not remain as well. For I have heard him under discussion north of the Ohio and far to the south, whilst an indescribable brown dog—a pointed dog, that was just dog and nothing more—tiptoed deliberately before our halted car across a deeply rutted road that ran between the decomposing wooden houses of George and Rastus and their cousins ; and as the Southern talk ran on, I wondered vaguely, noting the difference in tone, whether the twin wraiths of Mr. Mason and Mr. Dixon do not sometimes haunt the midnight neighbourhood of their obliterated Line. But that fleeting doubt would seem to indicate a problem ; and this is not a treatise.

EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT

THERE is one odd thing about Prohibition—and only one: it is no longer “news.” Gangsters are “news”; “slush-funds” (the elegant term by which the less mentionable portion of the party-funds is known) are “news”; improper plays become, if raided, “news.” But the Eighteenth Amendment is viewed with cold indifference by sub-editors and the many-headed *clientèle* for which they cater. Interviewers assail the arriving visitor for his impressions of the war-debts, Mr. Kellogg, divorce, the films, the President, and the Great American Novel. But the one topic on which they (and, in consequence, their interlocutor) are mute is Prohibition. It seemed a pity, because I had thought of something rather bright to say about it. But no one asked me. The American mind, it seemed, was made up on the subject. I never gathered quite distinctly in which direction it was made up. Perhaps in both; like those hotels which chain a corkscrew to the bathroom wall just underneath the notice requesting visitors to assist the management in its endeavours to enforce the law. Laodicean, if you will; but hospitable. You pay your money and you take your choice. Indeed, I am not sure whether that cryptic invitation does not embody the present attitude of the United States to the Eighteenth Amendment.

There is a good deal to be said for that arrest of judgment. For social experiments on such a scale can hardly be appraised within a generation or so of their initiation. It is a facile hallucination to credit Prohibition with the industrial prosperity of 1927, since booms have larger causes than slight adjustments in the habits of the working-class. Besides, if a slump comes in 1929, will that be due to Prohibition? I am not prepared to stake the future of a bold reform on such turns of the economic wheel. We shall

know in thirty years if it has failed or not. Meanwhile, it would be just as well for all of us—Wet, Dry, or merely moist—to keep an open mind.

This Rhadamanthine impartiality is not always entirely easy to retain. No democrat (I use the term in its simpler European sense, and without reference to the "solid South") can be altogether happy under the apparent inequalities, which are a present feature of the system. For, without recourse to subterfuge and dubious negotiations with bell-boys or unnamed voices on the telephone, the stranger will (if he wants drink) get nearly all the drink he wants. Champagne appears upon the tables of the rich ; the moderately well-to-do will always offer whisky ; and cocktails will be served in almost every drawing-room, though they diminish steadily in power as he moves westward. But working-men must go without—or risk the poisonous decoctions of the "moonshiner." That, in a broad view, is a grave injustice, however beneficial to the working-man. It may be temporary ; it may even, for all that I know, be inevitable. But while the enforcement of Prohibition remains unequal as between classes, it is not easy for the democrat to square his ardour for reform with the broad principles of social justice. "Prohibition for working-men" is not a rousing cry, though one can understand the attractions which it might hold for large employers. But something more universal must take its place, unless we are prepared for the anomaly of a privileged class with tolerated vices.

That class, indeed, is hardly benefiting by the reform. Its younger generation, which was to have grown up entirely innocent of the taste of alcohol and listened without sympathy or comprehension to the laments of its intemperate elders, appears to derive a certain social *cachet* from the possession of a hip-flask. This queer utensil even accompanies it to dances, where it is shared idyllically with partners or emptied with a nobler gesture into the common punch-bowl. (I once heard a host confess that he kept a

waiter stationed by a dummy bowl expressly to receive these unsolicited contributions and with orders to pour the stuff away.) But these unhappy aberrations may be merely temporary. Time may bring other regulations for spirited young people to break—a law, for instance, against smoking cigarettes or writing *vers libre* or flying the Atlantic. They are, in any case, mere by-products of the main process of Prohibition ; and that process will be watched with due attention until a final judgment can be passed—somewhere about 1960. Till then we must be satisfied with provisional comments and a few notes upon the by-products.

A second by-product seems graver, from the American standpoint, than the absorption of a slight excess of inferior gin by youths at parties. We often read, on the more sheltered side of the Atlantic, that the sense of public law is being undermined by systematic evasion. That evil consequence (if it be true) should not be underrated. One is inclined at first to view it in a slightly comic light, to ask how baby's sense of social discipline can really be impaired by hearing Father narrate with glee how he passed two Revenue officers in the Subway with three bottles of Scotch secreted in his suit-case. But the American significance of such a mood is graver. America is not merely trying to teach the children that Father must be obeyed. For America is herself a parent, with the most unruly, ill-assorted family of adopted children ever assembled on a single continent. From Syria, from Greece, the Balkans, Poland, Portugal, the Baltic States, and Sicily they come ; and in their new home a distracted mother does her best to teach them to behave. That task is hardly rendered simpler, if the sanctity of American law is questioned daily by the practice of true-born Americans. How can the simple Slav learn to respect the laws of property, when he sees every fifth citizen busily engaged in breaking other (but no less solemnly enacted) laws ? That is the obstacle which Prohibition, at its present stage, may possibly oppose to the wider and far more delicate process of converting

America's vast alien intake into the units of a civilised community. Local knowledge alone can assess its gravity. But if it really appears that the essential process of Americanisation is retarded by the chartered illegalities that appear inseparable from the Prohibition system, then America may possibly conclude that the price paid for social betterment is too high.

One other by-product deserves a comment. If one thing strikes the passing student of American crime more than another, it is the immense and costly elaboration of its equipment. Bandits appear in silent, sumptuous automobiles, blow safes with apparatus almost equal in value to their booty, and depart under cover of armaments on a scale sufficient to excite the envy of a South American republic. Not theirs the waiting Ford, the imperfect jemmy, and the cheap Belgian revolver of their European *confrères*. For transatlantic crime tiptoes on balloon tyres and defends itself from interruption with machine-guns. (No American criminal, so far as I am aware, has yet mounted a "heavy" or made off discreetly in a tank.) One wonders, in admiring awe, where this impressive apparatus comes from. And then a wandering doubt intrudes its head. The fantastic possibility suggests itself that these, perhaps, are further blessings poured from the cornucopia of Prohibition upon the criminal classes. You must remember that the drink-traffic is not yet abolished. It still exists. It has merely been transferred by law from its legitimate conductors to a criminal class, so that the profits previously earned by wine-merchants and brewers have been diverted to the bootlegger. The fund that once paid school-bills for the brewer's children is now shared out by rum-runners, bootleggers, their numerous (and well-armed) guardians, and the hostile parasites that prey upon them. The gunman and his friends are getting a good proportion of the profits earned (illegally, but earned right enough) by a great industry. I remember a taxi-driver in Kansas City, who expressed a deep regret that time did not avail for him to

show me "the million-dollar homes of our lawyers, doctors, and bootleggers." So it almost seems that Prohibition may be operating as a continuous endowment of the criminal class.

But even that is a mere by-product, though one would scarcely underrate its gravity. The main product of Prohibition will be (if all goes well) the transformation of a people's habits. I share the ambition of its friends; I frankly admire the boldness of their effort; but who can minimise the incidental risks?

PLAYTIME IN IOWA

I hear thy liquid accents—Ioway.

SIX LONG HOURS IN LOS ANGELES.

WHEN the young gentlemen, who live in Paris and write novels about the Middle West, expatriate upon its gloom, I lift an eyebrow. Not too far, but just perceptibly. (The same emotion rises at comminations on their native city, delivered by young ladies who have made money writing magazine-stories about Chicago and gone to live in New York in order to write still better about Chicago.) Not that I doubt their observation. For they have noted everything from gas-fittings to filling-stations and the gritty texture of concrete side-walks in accordance with the best literary models. *Madame Bovary* herself could not have seen it all more clearly ; and gloomy enough they seem to find it. Indeed, they do not seem to find Paris much more cheerful. For those trained observers a common gloom seems to unite Paris and Paris, Ind. So I have sometimes wondered whether each of us carries his own Middle West within himself.

My own, though city friends looked sad and a little sceptical when I announced my departure for Iowa, was obstinately cheerful. Did I not have a birthday in Cedar Rapids ? But that, perhaps, was hardly a fair test, as I had brought it with me from Europe. Of course, the world contains cities more readily adapted to carnival. The music of the trains (*obbligato* for bells) may pall ; and there is an undeniable monotony in the four intersecting streets that compose the shopping district. But what market-town could do much better ? For sheep-dip is equally uninteresting in shop-windows of any age ; no *devanture* is really thrilling to urban eyes, when filled with agricultural implements ; and even a Tudor shop-front fails to enhance

the charm of overshoes. A slightly older churchyard round an older church would hardly add to the amusements. Besides, had that been present, there could not have been three movies—separate and distinct, and with a change of programme twice a week. Neither would a soft-spoken darkey in a shoe-cleaning parlour have put, with perfect hospitality, a fresh record on his gramophone before attacking shoes alluvial with the rich mud of Iowa and, to this gay accompaniment, polished me back into society.

For me, the Middle West struck rather a note of determined gaiety—of such jollity, perhaps, as rasps the more delicate sensibilities of Mr. Sinclair Lewis, when his exhilarated characters bellow “ Well, well, well, well . . . ” and follow that benediction with a joke that is a little like a blow in the ribs. But what would you have ? Plain-dwellers must keep cheerful somehow. The inhabitants of undulating countries can afford to let their spirits rise and fall, for the ground rises with them ; a sunset behind a hill may raise them, or a wide prospect from a hill-top will restore their emotional tone. But on the level man is left to his own spiritual resources, and he must keep cheerful without such geographical aid. That, perhaps, is why Iowa, with its fifty thousand square miles of cultivated land, jars sometimes upon persons who, less certain of their cultivation, require to be assured that they are on the *rive gauche* before they venture on a smile.

At any rate, it failed to jar on me ; and I recall with a quite unsophisticated glow the acre-wide dancing-floor of a State University, that was one glorious, slowly rotating jam of young engineers, duly equipped with young engineeresses and played into a semblance of dancing by the unwearied thump and blare of a student orchestra. Whether they learned much engineering, I could not enquire ; although there was a good deal of highly technical speculation, with a wealth of “ breaking-strains ” and “ angles of impact,” on the security (or otherwise) of the musicians’ gallery, in use for the first time that evening. But at least they

learned to dance and smile and talk and choose engineeresses appropriate to their engineering futures. And what university can do much more (or even as much) for its *alumni*? They danced, where dancing was possible, on the big, lighted floor, or sat out together in a long gallery that hung above the freezing Iowa River. All round them, mile after mile of Iowa lay, opulently cultivable, in the darkness ; and presently they would go out into it and make homes there, with their pleasant manners and the survivals (if anything survived) of their college learning. Such social training may be, perhaps, a modest function for a university. But then a farming State may be a slightly unheroic corner of the earth. It has its private heroisms, of course ; but it may lack the higher flights and deeper depravities of less favoured regions. Yet that evening, as the band thumped and the young engineers went round, I was wholly unable to crave for a darker, more lurid scene : I could not find it in my heart to prefer Montmartre, as I should undeniably have done had I been born in Iowa. There was no echo in me of the hungry cry once uttered by William James amid "the blamelessness of Chataqua" for "the flash of a pistol, a dagger or a devilish eye, anything to break the unlovely level of 10,000 good people—a crime, murder, rape, elopement, anything would do." But then I rather like good people. So each of us, perhaps, gets the Middle West that he deserves.

ERMINE AT DES MOINES

Tucket : enter the Prince, attended.

OLD PLAY.

No, he was not strictly what could be described as an impressive figure. I met him face to face early one morning in an hotel lobby ; and as he stood there, at the foot of the elevator, surrounded by respectful men in bowler-hats and looking into space with the jaded look of a road-weary camel, I was a little sorry for him. He looked a foot or so above my head ; for he had all the unnecessary inches of his House, although he stooped a little. And he was really very tired, this Prince on tour and lecturing at large across the Middle West. What Furies drove him to it, I never ascertained. But he had learnt a lecture somehow ; and now the despair of royal tutors dispensed it nightly to respectful hearers. His route and mine kept intersecting. I arrived in cities as the dust was settling after his triumphal progress or departed in the pleasing flutter occasioned by his entry ; awed reporters asked for my opinions upon royal lecturers, and slightly ruffled by this august and (as it seemed to me) unfair competition, I once replied a little tartly that as his public rank supplied the main attraction, no doubt the proceeds of the royal exploits were duly credited to public funds in relief of taxpayers at home. But such malice was hardly chivalrous, since he was far more to be pitied. His lot was heavier than mine. For where I could slip into town at dawn and find a bath and morning papers, his arriving train was picketed by watchful Mayors. A line of handshakes on a freezing platform opened his day ; countless shutters clicked as he stumbled sleepily towards a car that whirled him—to breakfast ? No, for a comprehensive drive to view the city. For what Prince could live without such courtesies ? Breakfast must wait. There

was a line of boulevards, two pumping-stations, and an isolation hospital to be submitted for royal approval before anyone could think of breakfast. And then the Press, to say nothing of a loyal deputation of his own countrymen come, as good Ruritanians, to greet their Prince. No wonder that he drooped a little. For Western hospitality, going one better than Alphonse Daudet, had written a fresh and still more cruel chapter for *Les Rois en Exil*, as it devised new forms of entertainment for its dismal travesty of royalty.

There is something odd about these contacts of the Middle West with monarchy on tour. Sceptres are awkward things to pack ; and who can say which is the proper corner of a Pullman to stow an orb ? The air, when I was there, was still quivering with echoes of another royal visit, enhanced by queenly charm and even (in the windows of 10-cent stores) by queenly willingness to recommend a favoured hair-net with a regal profile and the bold royal signature itself. Excited fingers showed me the very room where Majesty had taken lunch ; and I heard the tragic tale of a whole City Commission that had bought white kid gloves before the royal route was changed. Royalty, it seemed, was very affable on tour. Long habit stood it in good stead ; a lifetime passed in royal approval of hospitals, reformatories, and women's institutes had glazed its eye to the correct degree of meaningless appreciation. It smiled and nodded at appropriate intervals, asked little sympathetic questions, and was quite uniformly gracious. Sometimes, indeed, it went still further, inviting fellow-countrymen located at safe distances to visit it at home. I found one happy loyalist, deep in the heart of Missouri, who had been the proud recipient of such an invitation and proposed to undertake the long journey home specially in order to renew the thrill of royal handshakes. Perhaps he started, though I tried to hint that things at home might be a little different. But if he did, I hope his expectations were fulfilled when he reached the Palace. No sentry, I trust, no

chamberlain with formal notions intervened to disappoint him, when he explained that Majesty herself had asked him to drop in. For royalty is somehow less familiar at home than in Missouri. Even my dejected Prince succumbed to the gay infection, inviting wildly cheering Rotarians to call him by his first (and only) name and confessing shyly that life held no ambition for him beyond a modest desire to be known as a good fellow. Yet, for the European, there is something a shade distasteful in this easy familiarity of royalty on tour. Such condescensions, we feel, are not for us ; we know that we shall never be invited to call it by its Christian name ; its profile never commends a hair-net to our humbler use ; and as the carriages go by, we have the slightly rueful certainty that we shall be kept discreetly in our places.

Not so the Middle West. I often wondered what that privileged region made of these caravans of conscientiously unbending royalty ; and one evening at Des Moines I seemed to get my answer. My invariable Prince (our routes had crossed as usual, and we were both in town at the same moment) was to be entertained at some stupendous banquet, and a thoughtful friend offered to take me. More thoughtful still, he rescued me from the embarrassments of the speakers' table and let me dine among the cheerful company that radiated from it down the hall. The hall was decorated with the stars and stripes tastefully entwined with the Ruritanian colours ; and an orchestra played slightly uneventful music, understood to be Ruritanian airs, although ex-Ruritanians (who abounded) looked singularly unmoved by these reminders of their childhood. My table was frankly irreverent. Some hero offered to collect the royal autograph, if anyone would bet against him. We bet him a dollar ; then we bet him two ; but when we rose to five, he gathered a handful of *menus* and marched off in an admiring silence, thrust them beneath the royal eye intent upon its dinner, and returned in triumph to collect his winnings. So everyone was happy—autograph collectors with the sign

manual, Royal Highness with a feeling that he had been becomingly informal, and Des Moines with the glad certitude that it had been disrespectful and that it warmed the heart to have a royal Prince to be disrespectful to. That was, I felt, the key to these odd progresses of royalty through the Republic. Then the great moment came. A Governor, with rare restraint, proposed our guest in a one-sentence speech that alluded in each of its four relative clauses to "our great country"; and royalty, unfolding almost to its full height and a little dull-eyed, responded with a pitiful little exhortation to the Ruritanians present to be good Americans, as well as good Ruritanians. It was as poor a speech as most of us had hoped: kings, we reflected happily, are a poor spectacle. Then we trooped off to see him lecture. After the lecture, at that happy moment when humbler lecturers escape, he would shake hands with five hundred of his fellow-countrymen. Then he would catch a train and recommence at dawn in the next city.

I saw him once again. Reading the programme in a New York theatre, I came on a familiar profile. Perhaps the eye was more alert; but the outline was unmistakable. Besides, his name was printed underneath, with the wrong kind of coronet. There was the life-size portrait of a cigarette as well, together with a message from the Prince intimating that he had smoked its fellows and adding, in an idiom peculiar to tobacconists but rare in royal circles, that he had "found them to possess a very mild and agreeable aroma." Poor Ruritania.

SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN

It was a growing town. It grew in both directions—outwards into the circumambient plain of Texas and upwards into a tall and deeply cherished skyline. How fast it grew, I never really learned ; because (to judge from my hotel) there appeared to be a pleasing local custom of doctoring the numbers of the floors. I mean, you were consigned to a destination on the ninth ; but the elevator seemed to get there a trifle sooner than you had expected. So next time you watched the numbers, as they slipped downwards past the gate, and were rewarded by the delicious discovery that they started at the sixth. There is probably some sound and perfectly sufficient reason for the apparent eccentricity of this numerical system. But ignorant newcomers may be forgiven for being a little mystified ; and one had sudden visions of a proud citizen, beguiled by the prevailing practice, exclaiming, " We stand to-day, sir, on the eighth floor. But if I am spared, I shall live to see this room on the fourteenth. Ours is a growing city. Yes, sir."

But let no hint of mine suggest a blot on that bright picture. For Texas was to leave its guest with gracious memories—of more friendly hands, I think, than in any State of the Union ; of the blue-bonnets starred among the grass (with dreadful penalties for picking them) on Alamo Heights, and the little churches in the plain that whisper in faded Spanish from their mouldering baroque the last enchantments of the Eighteenth Century ; of the notice-board in the hotel *patio* that bore the fabulous inscription, " To the alligator-pool " ; of cow-boys squatting in the dust, like humped quotations from O. Henry, along the Nueces River ; of a hot pinch of peppery Mexican *cuisine* taken with caution on a stone floor at San Antonio, and innumerable ways of serving barely credible vegetables that call up a

big, sunlit portico and a low, shady room where smiles and salads live in a grateful memory. These delights were as yet all untasted. But that morning, as became my first in Texas, the sky was blue ; for that was where I met the spring coming up from Mexico (and as I had come from Kansas City, we were glad to meet). The town stood up like a young daughter of New York—tall, if a little slim—and the whole place was full of sunshine and cheerful companionship. One even enjoyed being reproved by a policeman for crossing the road before the signal for pedestrians, that emblem of civic progress. But most of all one could enjoy the sense of all the things that we were near to. The sun was comfortingly near in the blue sky ; Mexico was only four hundred miles away ; and the past, the fabulous and distant past of Mr. Lincoln and Jeff Davis, was very near indeed.

One feels sometimes that Northern piety has managed to remove that era to almost too great a distance. Its figures loom in the dim mist of an heroic age ; the Union leaders have all the attributes (and some of the remoteness) of the Round Table ; and there is a risk that piety on such a scale may even defeat itself. For worship often dims the significance of the object worshipped ; and the world stands in some danger of losing a significant figure through this insistence on his historical apotheosis. If Mr. Lincoln is one with Pericles, he may come to signify as little. But in the South the war is nearer. There Gettysburg is still a living and angry memory, and one may discuss Pickett's advance and the delinquencies of General Sickles with more immediate interest than any Somme offensive. There is a rare attraction in living thus with a past age just round the corner. Belfast derives a similar exhilaration from its sense that the Battle of the Boyne was fought a year or so ago. But, to judge by Ulster, Robert Lee and Judah Benjamin are better company for any man's spiritual health than Dutch William.

Yet of all that Texas brought us near to—tamales, “bad

men " from Mexico, mezquite, Spanish missions—one contact was, for me, supreme. One wing that brushed us thrilled beyond all others. Did we not feel for an incomparable instant the delicious proximity of the Southern gentleman ? We heard his authentic accent, as he spoke of shot-guns and the good name of his women-kind ; and, like an impalpable visitant, we felt the brush of his susceptible honour. For honour filled the air—honour, that had impelled named persons only a few years back to shoot a neighbour just outside the bank and would, it seemed, excuse me if (delicious and terrifying thought) I shot my interlocutor. The honour that evokes these spirited deeds was not, I learned, the doer's. That, it appeared, was only defensible by normal means. But one imputation breathed against our women-kind would justify him, me, and everyone in the most desperate and lethal measures ; and so susceptible were Texan juries to the same noble sentiments that we could take them with perfect impunity, since no Court would convict a really chivalrous assassin. The shooting at the bank, for instance. That was occasioned in the course of litigation by an incautious plea on someone's part, which implied a disrespect of someone else's women-folk. It did, of course ; because the plea alleged that one of them, judicious lady, had been guilty of exercising unduc influence upon a suitable testator. What more natural than for her spirited relations to pursue the author of the charge to just outside the bank and shoot him with a shot-gun ? For the shot-gun, on such occasions, is our chosen weapon. I had met shot-guns before ; but they were the unworthy sawed-off shot-guns of the urban thug, or those which project from the windows of Cadillacs when driven fast by the Chicago police on night patrol. Here was a very different shot-gun —honour's blade itself, the lance of Galahad, and Bayard's point. I was a shade alarmed, being unaccustomed to the proximity of such fabled objects. But happy women-kind, whose honour has such prompt defenders. No wonder that they make such perfect salads.

MEXICAN CABARET

*Près de la porte de Séville,
Chez mon ami Lillas Pastia,
J'irai danser la seguedille
Et boire du Manzanilla.*

CARMEN.

It opened on the note of Conrad. As I recall it, that spring day on the Rio Grande was a symphony in three contrasted movements. The opening was Conrad—muted violins, a thud of muffled drums and, far and thin, the horns of *Nostromo* ever so faintly calling. The next movement—*allegretto*—unmistakably was Sinclair Lewis, hoarse with saxophones and riddled with syncopation, the authentic utterance of a New World, of Gershwin, Henry Ford, and George F. Babbitt ; and the last, the unforgettable *finale*, was the purest Kipling. But it opened, *adagio*, on the note of Conrad.

The night train for Mexico rolled endlessly across a never-ending plain towards the border, stopping to clank and hoot at a few unresponsive stations and roll on again. As day came, the sky paled. An outline on the roadside sharpened and was gone, as Texas in the shrill green of its sudden springtime flowed unendingly past the curtained windows. It was an unobservant train, or it must certainly have checked to see the little group that waited at a level crossing—a brown woman muffled in a black *mantilla* with a grave, preposterously hatted Mexican in the full solemnity of Sunday clothes and a small brown girl made browner still by the white glories of her First Communion, all waiting as the train clanked by.

So it rumbled towards Mexico under the rising day. Somewhere in front of it a station waited in the sun, where

incurious men lounged at the corner of a little *plaza* or tilted their vast hats together in endless Sunday conference. A morning band defied the hour of breakfast with the pounding time and wailing minor of a tango. *Mantillas* on their way to church hurried past with ears averted ; and the big, pointed hats went slipping round every corner and up every alley on the mysterious errands of a strange town. Below the *plaza*, where the roads drop suddenly towards the river, the sunlight fell full on the Rio Grande wandering, broad and blue, between two bright green banks towards the Gulf. A yellow bridge strode into Mexico ; and at the end of it a strange tricolour hung limply above a shed, where small brown men made passes at official papers, and the glory of them all—the doorkeeper of Mexico—sat superb in the sunshine of the roadway, belted with cartridges, a miracle of ivory-butted private artillery on either hip.

Across the river the road climbed steeply in the sunshine ; and a little town lay in the dust beside it, like its unnumbered dogs. It was a sad, Conradian little place, lit only by the smiles of negroes and the eyes of children. You could buy fresh gardenias from a black *bambino* ; but you bought them in a dismal drinking-vault (there is no other industry along the border between Latin depravity and the Eighteenth Amendment). And all around the mud houses lay peeling in the sunshine. Even the soldiers at the roofless fort on the hill, strange little heirs of Montezuma, lounged in their ill-fitting khaki and exhibited their Chinese profiles against a peeling wall of unroofed mud. Dogs pointed at incalculable garbage. Children played in pools. And, taller than ever, the pointed hats slipped by on their mysterious errands.

But the note of Conrad, too long sustained, seemed to break suddenly, as the symphony swept towards its second movement ; and unmistakably the voice of Babbitt rose on the air beyond the river. Within the sheltering United States, two hundred yards from Mexico, there was an excellent hotel. A kindly clerk, some bell-boys, and an elevator

marked it for civilisation's own ; and from its countless dressing-tables on that sunlit morning it caroled blithely in large type,

“ HURRAH !

To-MORROW is SUNDAY ”—it yipped—“ that Wonderful Old Day of Rest.” Then a more soothing note : “ We are mighty glad to have you with us—May we try and help you start the day right ? We will begin with the morning paper under your door. We will be delighted to serve you ‘ Breakfast in Bed ’ without service charge—like good friend wife or mother would do when we are all fettered out. Please feel at liberty to call the office if we can add further to your comfort. . . . ” Thus Babbitt in the morning sunshine ; while beyond the river Spain and the heirs of Montezuma lay in the shade of peeling walls.

Then the melody changed swiftly, and we were soon *en plein* Kipling. That authentic note rose full-throated where it was least expected. For one had not looked for echoes of the Diamond Jubilee along the Rio Grande. The little street, where the *cafés* elbowed each other with their flap-doors and scrawled invitations to the parched citizens of a righteous Republic, was no preparation for the full majesty of the last movement. The day’s symphony ended with a magnificent surprise. A more modern note might seem to lurk about those trellised barnyards, which the proud citizens of Nuevo Laredo call *cabarets* because the stone floor is smooth with dancing and there are chairs and tables under the trellised shadows of the climbing plants. Indeed, a scar-faced bootlegger, straight out of a crook play, slipped in with lady-friend, took the traditional quick, furtive glance round that blameless quadrangle of sun and shadow, keeping his fist in a jacket pocket that was deliciously suggestive of a hidden gun. That was a whiff of *Broadway*, of hijacking, automatics, and the last naughty elegance of 1927. We seemed so far from Kipling. But he came. He came four strong in a dusty automobile all the way from

Austin, Texas ; and soon he was hailing us, shifted us bodily with our two anaemic beers to his Gargantuan table, where we were made acquainted, swapping businesses, birth-places, and ancestors. We were, of course we were, Saxon beyond belief—pure Dane from Yorkshire, Ulster Scot from Belfast, something from Manchester, and one Londoner. Our loyalties (thanks to King George III) were slightly diverse. But the Breed was there, expressed in various forms. We jeered at each other's countries, bantered the Debt, the neutral, and the appointed imbecility of our various governors. The Kipling note began to sound above the quick throb of fox-trots emitted by a shirt-sleeved band to four circling couples. But it rang clearest of all when we launched (Austin was speaking with a fine Texan eloquence) on a high-coloured, ramifying narrative of Mexican adventure. We sat and listened, elbows among the glasses ; and the smallest of the company took careful note of all that passed. The Kipling circle was complete.

It was a rich *exposé* of a crowded evening, beginning in pure conviviality and ending—no one quite knew how—in the far from Dutch interior of a Mexican prison. The occasion was obscure—a Rabelaisian insult offered to a stranger Ford left unprotected in the *plaza* was the pretext. Shocked faces came and went in the darkness ; angry voices rose ; first Mexican police and then the Mexican army swarmed like hornets in the summer night ; and the revellers were soon surrounded, pricked with bayonets, and driven, led, and prodded into gaol, to cling to their valuables with the clutch of drowning men and threaten nervous gaolers with loose bricks jerked neatly from the flooring (Belfast knew the trick). “I made a death-line,” someone explained proudly. “‘Cross that,’ ” I said, “‘and you’re dead,’ ” eliciting a piteous “*No intiende*” from the turnkey, answered heroically by the brick-wielder in his Discobolus pose, “But I do intend.” The night, it seemed, had ended with a general gaol-delivery and much signing of official papers understood to embody vows under solemn bond never to

return to Mexican territory. But there we sat securely sipping beer, our backs to the dancing-floor where beauty tripped to crooning saxophones across the chequered shadows.

The story told, we left in triumph, two passengers in front to bear the driver company and three large men behind, all happy and extremely vocal; and as our fore-wheels took the bridge to pass the Rio Grande, our last defiance floated on the wind in a challenge to outraged Mexico, as six at once we bawled the age-old watchword of Texan freedom, "Remember the Alamo." For opening on the note of Conrad, the day closed with brass, wood-wind, and full percussion on the authentic note of Kipling.

EXPATRIATE

*Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes :
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases.*

THE DUCHESS'S SONG.

THE young man wrote it to annoy, I think. It was quite nicely written ; but the whole composition seemed to hint at a pink tongue protruded from a cheeky face, an inky thumb seeking a nose in the eternal gesture of defiance. Whom he intended to annoy was not so clear. There were passages that seemed to point to some obscure vendetta against the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*. But these were merely incidental ; and since he published it at home, I conclude that he wrote it with the praiseworthy intention of exasperating his countrymen at large.

It was a closely reasoned vindication, in four columns, of those American literary men who have incurred their country's displeasure by residence in Europe. He explained at length the reasons for his own emigration and its (to him) wholly satisfactory results. His European domicil, it seemed, involved no disloyalty ; since (if I followed his argument) it gave him a better view of the American scene. That is quite possible : myopic persons are frequently assisted by increasing their distance from the object viewed. I hope it did a little for his vision of the European scene as well. For he once startled us by sending—more powerful than Fate in 1870—a character to “Metz with MacMahon.” Or will he have to go back to America to get that right ?

The old debate whether residence outside America involves apostasy will always rage ; and a cautious neutral has no desire to stray between those eager firing-lines. The issue may be safely left to the ever-watchful guardians of the

American soul and the expatriates themselves. Columbia must spank her own children, if she wants to. But I confess to a suppressed desire to help her. We have had exiles of our own, of course. Lord Byron left us ; Shelley preferred a southern climate ; Mr. and Mrs. Browning watched the traffic from Casa Guidi windows ; and even Stevenson fled far into the Pacific. But, then, did they ever give themselves such airs about it ? They were not half so irritating as these intolerable exiles of the Boul' Mich' for the plain reason that they were not nearly so pretentious. They just went abroad because they wanted to, without a hint that expatriation is a form of virtue or that the expatriate alone can get a comprehensive vision of his own country. Byron did not insist that Athens was the only place from which to get a view of London, nor Shelley that the qualities of George III became more visible from the Gulf of Spezzia ; Browning never contended that the eternal verities were nearer to Florence than to Regent's Park ; and when did Stevenson maintain that the best view of Princes Street was from Samoa ? They went because they liked it ; had they liked it less, they would have stayed at home—and that was all about it.

Few spectacles are more distasteful than this self-constituted aristocracy of expatriates seated, finger on pulse, outside their *cafés*, measuring the progress of their own improvement. But I usurp Columbia's function of spanking her erring children. For I had not intended to pursue the main issue raised in this singularly complacent *apologia*. To tell the truth, another aspect of it caught and held my wandering attention. Somewhere upon that animated page my young friend defined his attitude to Europe, a continent which (as he brightly volunteered) "American money and American methods are saving." Full of a rising hope, I read on ; and under my admiring gaze the expatriate soared to the loftiest empyrean where spread-eagles scream from Pole to Pole. His countrymen abroad —the very countrymen from whom he had taken refuge

"to live, surrounded by people, by music, by good plays, by good pictures and the stimulation of intellectual companionship"—these drab reminders of his childhood inspired him to the strangest heights of eloquence. They were, it seems, "everywhere, like the Roman citizen, respected." Were they not "first cousins of the ancient Roman citizen and half-brothers of the English Milor of the day when Palmerston was forcing even such old foxes as Metternich to bow down before the power of England"? Well, well, well, if they are really as good as that (and I have not denied it), it seems a pity for him not to live among them. For one would certainly have chosen to live in Rome under the Roman Empire.

Not so the young expatriate. He apparently prefers to admire his fellow-countrymen at a distance, and through his admiration of them to despise all other countries. France? "It is Standard Oil money which is saving Versailles and the Grand Trianon from ruin." Italy? "Rome is almost clean, and if Mussolini succeeds in evading bullets long enough he will, in his energetic American way, perhaps make certain quarters smell less like a garbage can from which the lid has just been lifted." England, perhaps? Oh, no. For he knows the way to "feel sorry for England. It is the worst but also the most subtle of insults. . ." One might be justified, perhaps, in taking the slipper from Columbia's hand and continuing her offspring's education, whilst he is still careened. For the expatriate, it seems, puts out his tongue at hospitable strangers as well as at his mother.

But, worst of all, this student of the international problem rounds off the unpleasing exhibition with a shrill and ill-mannered denunciation of his greatest predecessor. "It was Henry James," he tells us, "himself so thoroughly of that era of snobs and expatriates . . ." and then the juvenile proceeds to correct that mellow vision of the interaction of Americans and Europe. *Daisy Miller*, it seems, is now completely out of date. She would be shingled, exquisitely

dressed, and brimful of cocktails—"the confusion of European men who cannot fathom the manners of a demi-mondaine in the body of an Artemis." But when Italian noblemen pursue her hand and fortune, we learn that she will merely murmur: "Why, shall I marry that wop? He dances well but he's only a bum." One may be pardoned for preferring the psychology (no less than the idiom) of Henry James. For by an odd mischance I read that very morning in my paper:

"NEW YORK HEIRESS TO BE RECEIVED BY POPE
AFTER WEDDING

Rome, March 31.—(By Universal Service.)—Miss Anne Townsend, of Oyster Bay, N.Y., who will wed the Marquis Pellegrini Quarantotti at the chapel of the Noble Guard of the vatican on April 28, will be received into the Church, April 17, by Mgr. Mann, the rector of Beda College of Rome, her instructor.

The religious ceremony will be performed by Mgr. Caccia Dominion, after which the couple will be given a private audience and be blessed by his holiness, the pope."

So one wop was not so bum.

SERVIDOR

MINE be it, Muse, to praise the American (or should I have said “th’ American”?) hotel. The theme is large; but as I know far more about it than most respectable, home-loving Americans, I am plainly the man. True, in a moment of exasperation I once divided American hotels into two classes—those in the hall of which the arrival of a railway-train would attract attention, and those where it would not. But that was hardly just. Someone would be pretty nearly sure to notice it almost anywhere.

The hall—I never really learned to call a hall the “lobby”—was the first object of my awe. It was so very large. Besides, marble in great quantities is always a little overpowering; and marble was the invariable setting of that scene. Crowds surged in all directions; for the hotel-lobby appears to perform for the modern city many of the functions of the market-place in ancient city-states. There are shops in it as well; and there the clerk behind his marble desk performs his daily miracle of reading your signature upside-down, as you write it on a little card, and then greeting you with ready courtesy by your own name (I have known unobservant men, whom this performance left under the gratifying illusion that they were public characters, until they saw how it was done—I thought so once myself). There also stern young ladies deprive you of your correspondence, until you satisfy them by your answers that you are veritably the bearer of your own name. One name, indeed, is hardly enough: you must get it all correct. For mail addressed to “Mr. Alfred . . .” will rarely be surrendered on a bare request for the postal matter of “Mr. A. . . .” One wondered how much criminal ingenuity in this country has been devoted to getting other people’s letters; and it was comforting to recognise the impressive

system that has been devised to foil it—for sometimes you can hardly get your own.

I loved the lobby, and I still recall it almost wistfully. What sylvan music can compare with the call of the bell-boy to his quarry? Besides, it is the home of an impenetrable mystery. Seated around in vast and richly gilded chairs were figures of which I never ascertained the true significance. From town to town, from State to State, they never varied. They were just the same in California as on the Atlantic seaboard. I saw them all across the continent, immovably enthroned and sitting invariably with their hats on. There was a place for them to leave their hats; but they never left them. I can see them now, posed inscrutably all round the lobby. They never read; they never moved. Perhaps they spoke to one another; but if they did, I feel sure that communication was effected by some inaudible form of lip-reading. I often watched them on their silent thrones, reflecting, with Mr. Masefield's *Sard Harker* in the silence of his Aztec temple, that "just in such a way should the thoughts of the gods pass to each other, without a movement of the lips." I never learned their inner thoughts. Perhaps they had none. But they remain for me, beyond the Mayas or the Serpent Mound, the unsolved riddle of the American continent.

No less mysterious, though in a more domestic key, is one other feature of American hotel-decoration. What scientist has ever explored the reason for hanging caged canaries in the dining-room? The practice varies in detail. Thus, Buffalo, N.Y., prefers them hung in window-arches, while Columbus, O., concentrates them in the middle of the room. But why birds at all? And why canaries? I often asked the question, but was never answered. One glimmer of a clue presents itself to the enquiring mind. The sight of caged canaries dimly recalled a lesson once learnt in British coalfields. For they have a practice there, after explosions, of sending a canary down the pit with the first rescue-party. The bird, it seems, is

peculiarly susceptible to poisoned air, and its conduct often indicates the proximity of fatal gases. May one assume that hotel canaries perform a similar office in the dining-room? I always liked to think so, to see the waiters serving with a wary eye upon the cage. The canary droops : a waiter edges near the window. As it falls from the perch unconscious, he flings the window wide. Extravagant? Then I should like to see a rational explanation.

Upstairs the interest is slightly thinner. Yet it is from the upper regions that the American hotel derives its true character. For upstairs it grows impersonal. A dreadful solitude pervades it from the movement that you leave the cheerful society of the elevator. Here is no chambermaid to bear you company among her cans, no valet among someone else's trousers. For, by a system that is efficient but a shade unsociable, these services are centralised—your water in the plumbing of your taps and your valeting in a tailor's department somewhere out of sight. For that, and for all else, you have recourse to your room telephone. It will bring you meals, letters, newspapers, pressed clothes, and washing. That black orifice becomes your only peep-hole on the living world. No maid will bob in with hot water, no man with "Everything all right, sir?" You may not see a soul upstairs for days, except when a half-open door reveals a travelling salesman seated languidly among rows and rows of ladies' shoes. (To the unaccustomed eye there is always something a little odd in those discreet displays of samples ranged along the walls of hotel bedrooms ; and I never quite recovered from coming suddenly on an array of hats for coloured ladies, who appeared to like their hats more coloured still.) But, apart from these diversions, you will see no signs of life except the bell-boys whom your telephone evokes (at a trifling charge) from the lower regions. Sometimes, indeed, you are denied the infrequent consolation of a human face by a device that seems to typify in a supreme degree the slightly inhuman tone of the American hotel. It bears the impressive (and not unromantic) name of "Servidor,"

and consists of a hollow space inside your bedroom door with entrances from either side. You hang a suit in it and telephone. Two minutes later something from the corridor bumps invisibly inside the Servidor, and your suit is gone. An hour later you hear another bump, and know that your garments have returned. I do not doubt its merits ; but its fine austerity is somehow wasted on Europeans, who rather like to see a human face. Perhaps such promiscuity is outworn, and I only venture on a mild complaint with diffidence.

But no word of mine must hint at imperfections. For, Muse, I undertook to praise the American hotel, and I am perfectly prepared to. Where else upon the inhabited globe is washing done in half a day and all returned with your initials carefully inscribed in ink on silk pyjamas or attached with loving care to evening socks by little metal clips ? Where else is writing-paper always present ? What other telephone is half so quickly answered ? Where, if not here, does a plain request for tea evoke the staggering interrogation, "Orange Pekoe, Formosa Oolong, or English Breakfast ?" And in what other clime are corkscrews chained to the bathroom wall ?

SALVATION AND SIX PER CENT.

BUT I must not be unjust. It was only five per cent. There is no need to magnify, in spite of all temptations to alliterate.

It was one of those large American magazines with an exciting name and the portrait of an emphatic blonde on the outside. She was what, I believe, is called a speaking portrait. I was about fifteen yards from the bookstall when I saw her first; and from where I stood, I could hear her speaking quite distinctly. Since we are all human, I fell at once to the liquid appeal of her rather more than life-size eyes. That they were fitted throughout with silky, if slightly glutinous, eyelashes it is barely necessary to add. That she smiled is an understatement. That I bought her forthwith (together with the accompanying one hundred and twenty pages or so of printed matter) is almost too obvious to require announcement.

After a few moments of dazed contemplation, I turned the cover and looked inside. A mood of comfortable anticipation settled on me as I opened the magazine. I should find, I knew that I should find, those intimate details of the life of film-stars, which represent to me the highest form of contemporary fiction. I should see them at the swimming-pool, the steering-wheel, the bathing-beach, and all those other hyphenated places where we should all so much rather see them than on the screen. There would be revealing glimpses of their new thirteenth-century English manse (of cream stucco) in the Beverly Hills and of the sun-parlour recently erected under their personal supervision in the Hispano-Mauresque style. I should bask for an hour or so in the sunshine of their expansive personalities. For me they would unfold their deepest convictions on love and marriage, on table-decoration, and the latest openings in Mah-jongg.

It was going to be a glorious magazine, with a new feature on every page that would trail away undiscoverably into that trackless hinterland of advertisements which makes the back pages of an American periodical call so irresistibly to the explorer latent in every Englishman. And these jewels would all be set and framed in those sprightly, yet decorous, scenes of country-house life which are believed to induce the purchase of motor-cars or the more majestic setting in which the Queen of Rumania relieves the tedium of Court life (and, perhaps, her country's Budget) by assisting the sale of beauty specialities.

I began, as a true fancier should always begin, with the advertisements. And then I saw it. It caught my eye, in generous capitals running across an entire page :

“BUY BROADWAY TEMPLE BONDS
AND LET GOD COME TO BROADWAY!”

I read on. There was clearly nothing else to be done. It dropped to a large italic and exclaimed :

*“A 5 per Cent. Investment in Your Fellow-Man’s
Salvation.*

Backed by Big Business and Banking Executives!”

There was a picture of a large edifice faintly reminiscent of the Bush Building topped by Westminster Cathedral and backed by a sort of Aurora Borealis, which it appeared to be trying to wear as a halo. This edifice, I learned, was to contain :

“A church auditorium seating 2,200, together with Sunday-school rooms, gymnasium, swimming-pool, social hall, and every modern convenience for religious and community work ; an apartment hotel in the tower over the church containing 644 rooms, public offices, cafeteria, dining-room, and everything necessary for a first-class apartment hotel, and the whole overlooking the Hudson River or Long Island Sound ; apartments for housekeeping in the two wings, which will accommodate 500 people ; stores on the Broadway front, which will be very desirable and therefore bring in a solid income.”

That, without a word added or subtracted, is what it said. I paused for a few moments in simple reverence of the genius who, after two thousand years of ecclesiastical architecture, had solved the tantalising problem so long presented by the waste space inside the steeple. And as I bowed in silent awe before the easy brilliance which had inserted a cafeteria (to say nothing of 644 rooms) above the church, I asked a little bitterly why Wren had not thought of anything like this . . . a cafeteria and twelve hundred rooms, the whole overlooking Ludgate-hill and the River Thames. What a tragedy of wasted opportunity.

Then, filled with morbid self-reproaches, I read on, where a gentleman had appended something in the nature of a lyrical prospectus. Possibly it was just a thought more exciting than those austere communications to which the chilly provisions of the Companies (Consolidation) Act have accustomed us. It began like this—and once more let me explain that I transcribe faithfully : “ Broadway Temple is to be a combination of church and Skyscraper, religion and revenue, salvation and 5 per cent.—and the 5 per cent. is based on ethical Christian grounds.” The happy promoter then plunged, with less satisfactory results, into the more awkward field of theology in an heroic endeavour to demonstrate that his faith always “ spoke in terms of reward—He approved of the man who makes money in the parable of the ten talents, and he said the labourer is worthy of his hire—and by that token the investor is entitled to his income.” One had an uneasy feeling that the material was growing a shade intractable. But there were all those stores on the eligible frontage to be brought somehow into the picture. Uneasy lies the church that wears a cafeteria.

Then returning with redoubled vigour from this uncomfortable excursion into theology, the prospectus restated its main theme with the full gusto of a sonata. The throbbing note ran through the whole and united it—church, frontages, cafeteria, and all—in a splendid, vibrant whole. “ It is going to be a self-supporting, dividend-paying church—

that's what captured the imagination and support of the great business men behind it—they liked the robust conception of a Church that is not a supplicant but a producer!—not only preaching that Christianity is consistent with Business, but demonstrating by its own example.” The dithyrambic gentleman added, after a minor ecstasy of enumeration and measurements, that “when each room is lighted and the whole is topped by a revolving flaming cross 34 feet high, it will recall religion impressively to the six million people who can see it.” I am sure I hope so.

One sometimes feels that we neglect the true wonders of the world we live in. Anxious, for once, to do my duty by a worthy object, I kept an observant eye for its recurrence; and in a later issue of same stupendous magazine, I was rewarded. For as an idle fancy strayed through its countless pages, a familiar voice exclaimed, in large capitals, from the top of a page :

“ RELIGION AND REVENUE
GLORIFIED BY A WONDERFUL IDEAL ”

Followed a list of “some of the keenest and best-known business men in New York”; and I was back in the old fairyland. The picture, alas! was still the same. But the haloed skyscraper was now tersely described as “a Twentieth Century Cathedral, Church, Hotel, Stores, Apartment House; Self-supporting Community-serving”; and another dithyramb observed that it was “in a sense, a gigantic symbol of the incontrovertible fact that Godliness can and should be continuous.” It would, it seemed, be equally visible “on sunny days, or nights filled with the sinister menace of storm.”

In a *crescendo* of eloquence the new evangelist soared to his peroration . . . “more than a revolutionary idea, more than a sound investment, more than an architectural wonder of the age; it represents a spiritual stepping-stone in man’s climb upward.” A happy postscript adds the welcome news that “John D. Rockefeller, Jr., has agreed to take the last \$250,000 of the Bonds.”

JUDICATURE

It may be felt that, as this is not strictly an original composition, it has no place in these pages. But what am I to do? It came into my hands in a perfectly regular fashion, and I do not mean to let it go. The enquiries leading to this discovery were irreproachably conducted. As a matter of fact, I was reading the newspaper in bed—and there it was. As it was there, I saw it. If it had not been there, I suppose I should have missed it, and the world would have been (I think) the poorer. But there it was ; and having seen it there, I resolved to pass on the information. I mean, I simply had to tell someone.

It is, I understand, the practice of all well-conducted *savants* to communicate scraps of significant information to their colleagues assembled in learned societies. These bodies subsequently print such communications in their Proceedings, which are eventually bound and decorate the tables in dentists' waiting-rooms. Perhaps I may be permitted to appear, for this one occasion, as a *savant* and to communicate my small discovery. It will, I think, be appreciated by waiting dental patients, if by no one else. But I only offer it as just a fragment, a *scintilla* of evidence, one tiny, brightly-coloured section of the whole noble mosaic of the United States.

You will find it on the map. It is a growing city in a pleasant situation. As it lies well to the north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, no part of its apparent oddity can be attributed to Western manners or to Southern retrogression. It was American soil when John Adams succeeded Washington and Mrs. Adams hung out her clothes to dry in the East Room of the new White House ; and there has been no Frontier within miles of it for a hundred years. As its population was very nearly 100,000 a quarter of a century

ago, you can scarcely term it a "hick town." Its industries are old-established ; and its citizens take pardonable pride in several residential quarters pleasantly diversified by hills and trees, as well as by that delightful variety of domestic architecture which lends their greatest charm to American suburbs in eyes familiar with the depressing uniformity practised in Europe.

So there it stands, a dignified community with a strong civic sense and an admirable train-service. Perhaps it is its civic sense (or else a wise provision of the law) that compels it to print *in extenso* the minutes of its City Council—or, to adopt its own (and, for this purpose, the more proper) designation, the "Official Proceedings of the City Commission." This full and formal record is a welcome substitute for the garbled snatches of debate, with which British readers are more familiar when altercations between local Councillors wake the reporter ; and it appears in the local newspaper, where it fills several columns, paid for (I trust) at advertising rates. I read it, because all official documents possess a morbid fascination for me. Their queer, rheumatic style has all the charm of early Gothic sculpture. It has something of the tortured grace of stiffly smiling effigies outside a French cathedral ; the broad comedy of War Office English is worthy of Falstaff's countrymen ; and I can hang for hours over those departmental stylists, who effect all their transitions by means of the exquisite expression, "Having regard to which . . ." But I digress. The official page was waiting, and I responded to its call. It opened well enough :

"OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY
COMMISSION
CITY OF . . .

Regular session, Monday evening, February 28th, 1927.
Commission was called to order by His Honor, Mayor Swarthout.
Present—Coms. Baldwin, Gruenbauer, Karel, Kilstrom,
Oltman, Swarthout, Sweet."

(The presence of Commissioner Baldwin gave me quite a sense of home.) Then someone moved that the minutes of the last meeting should be taken as read, and the deliberations opened. They opened under the slightly unpromising rubric of

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS.

But the standard rose at once. For the very first communication was signed by a Justice of the Peace. Better still, it related to his salary ; and, best of all, the greater part of it appeared to be in verse. I subjoin the document :

" TO THE HONOURABLE, THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSIONERS
OF . . .

40129. Gentlemen : In accordance with the request of his honor, The Mayor, made at the last meeting of your honorable body, Feb. 24, 1927, I herewith submit the following as an expression of sentiments relative to the action of your honorable body *in re* salaries of the Justices of the Peace :

APPRECIATION

For the Mayor and City Commissioners of . . .

Kind words are sweeter than spring flowers in bloom,
And smiles will lighten up the darkest gloom ;
Pleasant it is when some good end is won
To hear a friend say, ' Boy, that was well done ! '
But all the world is dressed in gayest hues,
The baby has a brand new pair of shoes,
Mother's dear face now wears a sweeter grin,
Butcher and baker gladly ' listen in,'
When these fond words bring joy of widest scope :
' Here is that raise in your pay envelope ! '
Wishing your honors health, long life and happiness,
I remain,
Gratefully and sincerely yours,

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE."

To this domestic rhapsody an official hand appended the somewhat chilly acknowledgment, "*Accepted and filed.*" I

felt somehow that the judicial lyric deserved a warmer welcome.

That was my find ; and, I confess, it left me gasping a little. Few jurists could, I think, repress a start at the slightly unusual spectacle of a police magistrate thanking a City Council for a rise in heroic couplets. Or even in prose. I did not exaggerate his status. A city Justice, I was well aware, was not a State judge, and still less a member of the Federal judiciary ; illimitable distances separated him from the chilly eminence of the Supreme Court of the United States. And yet, on its little scale, his relation to the City Commission somehow seemed to typify the one great variation which the Fathers of the Constitution had introduced into the familiar machinery of British institutions. I knew (for Bryce had taught me) that thirty-eight States elect their judges. I knew, as well, that local Justices are frequently elected or, if not, appointed by an equally elected Mayor. But I had never realised so keenly the vague position of dependence occupied by the Bench in a Jeffersonian democracy. Indeed, I had always done my very best to stifle the facile conclusion, which rises so easily on European minds, that an elected Bench can scarcely handle crime with the unflinching hand that goes with a fixed tenure. But as I read the lyric in my morning paper, I began to think—about Montesquieu and the crime-wave and the wisdom of Democracy.

WAR DEBT

THERE is no need to be alarmed. This is not economics. If it is anything, it is a Social Note. But it is just worth recording.

I had expected many topics—Prohibition, the perversity of Mr. Sinclair Lewis, Shanghai, the Democratic nomination, and even Evolution. But there are two that any British visitor will find predominating in his hosts' conversation—the Prince of Wales and the Debt. Other matters are lightly touched on ; but these two return with the fatal certainty of a recurring decimal. Their consuming interest in the first (though I was never able to respond with exclusive information) displayed a charming lack of prejudice. But the second always mystified me rather. Why was it always on the *tapis* ? I had not thought about it much ; I did not think about it then. It had not crossed the public mind at home for years—since, in fact, it ceased to be an open question. But British guests are everywhere expected to unmask whole batteries of views about it. This one, at any rate, failed ignominiously. He had no deep resentments to reveal, no readjustments to suggest. Indeed, one remembered feature of those conversations on the Debt has made him almost grateful for the settlement. For it evokes a shy and genuine affection for his own country in the most unexpected quarters. Yet even that may not be altogether good for us : for is not the most exasperating quality of Englishmen their perpetual certainty of having done the right thing ?

LES AVEUGLES

I RECOLLECT it dimly as one of those preposterous master-pieces of the Nineties, that were the joy of parodists when I was a boy at school. You watched a dimly-lighted stage for hours, whilst unconvincing characters in draperies did partly comprehended things. They talked a little, too. But I recall a comforting conviction that it did not really matter whether you understood their goings-on or not, because it was all an allegory. (For an allegory released one in the Nineteenth Century from all comprehension, just like a complex in the Twentieth.) It was all an image of the life of man or the growth of plants or the habits of the wasp or something. And nearly all the characters, for some reason buried deep in the author's lumbering symbolism, were blind. They were led about, complaining a good deal ; and though nothing was further from their creator's purpose, the whole effect was vaguely ludicrous. For that gifted man had managed to make even blindness funny : it was never, I think, more obvious that Providence intended all Flemings to be buffoons.

But I recall that faded scene, because it always seems to me an admirable image of the modern state. That, perhaps, is what the author meant, though I should hardly think so. For the Nineties were far too deeply interested in the problems of the individual to think about the state. Yet are they not all, our countries, a little like large, sightless persons led around by small (and more or less unsatisfactory) guides, by statesmen with ideas, by journalists with none, by soldiers with obsessions—and, above all, by school teachers ? For the modern state is very largely what its school teachers make it. Prussia, for instance. Germany surprised the world at large in 1914 ; but it surprised nobody who knew what Prussian teachers had been up to for a generation past. The British working-class owes many of the gaps in its

thinking to the slack-minded Socialism once prevalent among a class of our school teachers. I do not know how the Duce handles his schools ; but the future of Fascismo will be determined far more by the teachers working on their adolescent material than by the visible proceedings of all the adults that ever sang romantic songs and wore black shirts. And where in the world is the school teacher a more powerful agent than in the United States ? For the school is the one factor that may weld that odd composite into a durable amalgam, or the one solvent (if you prefer the usual image) in the whole melting-pot. The teacher—and with the schools I include the universities—may manage to infuse some common quality into the offspring of Scot, Pole, Croat, Czech, Portuguese, and Irishman that will bind the States together. He may yet give them a common population in addition to their existing community of flag and institutions. And no one else can do it.

That is why I was always anxious to know more of American education. For the school teacher is the Chief Executive of the American future.

Here, as on other sides of American life, the European eye is strangely blinded by the odd travesty of itself which America has exported with so much vigour. Fiction and movies have taught us to regard American universities as fantastic establishments located on something enigmatically termed a “campus,” where young men with large initials on their chests indulge in exercises of incredible violence to the accompaniment of still more incredible ululations. I soon learned a little better ; though my first illusions seemed to derive some confirmation from a news item, which I once discovered with appropriate alarm in a Los Angeles newspaper :

“YELL LEADERS WILL GATHER

*Southland Rooting Chieftains Invited to Convention at U.S.C.
To-morrow.*

High-school cheer leaders from 114 Southern California secondary schools have been invited to attend the annual

Cheer Leaders' Convention at the University of Southern California to-morrow, when Burdette Henney, Trojan yell leader, will be in charge of an all-day program, beginning at 9 a.m. and ending at 10 p.m.

The handling of the rooting section, staging of stunts, coherent and systematic cheer leading, infusion of pep, effective yells and songs, good sportsmanship and the relation of the high-school rooting section to the college rooting section will be feature points of discussion and demonstration on the program."

That, one feels, is hardly a promising *milieu* in which to teach the young Slovène the elusive elements of Western civilisation. But it is not the sole, or even the main, ingredient of American college education. What is, a hurried traveller cannot easily define. The Eastern universities, of course, have international reputations and a far simpler problem ; for they are merely engaged in the normal business of a university, in scholarship, research, and education, only slightly impeded by those enterprising benefactors of commercial tastes who insist upon endowing Chairs of Book-keeping by Double Entry—though even here one sometimes underrates the heavy handicap upon American scholarship. It is an easy fact for Englishmen to overlook that the main subject-matter of most forms of scholarship resides in Europe. We are so used to living with the Record Office just round the corner and the Paris *Archives* an afternoon away, that we can hardly imagine the embarrassments of American scholars, forced by geography to come three thousand miles in order to consult their sources. A Long Vacation spent in hasty note-taking is a poor substitute for the continuous facilities available to Europeans ; but it is a rare tribute to devotion.

Yet research, pure scholarship, and Eastern universities are not the most significant features of American education. Its most exciting work, I feel, is being done a little further to the west. For the teacher's opportunity lies rather in those State Universities of hurried terms and crowded classes,

which Western taxpayers maintain (slightly under protest) for the advantage of their children. What he is making of it, I know too little of the West and Middle West to judge. I think he sees his business rather as a matter of elementary civilisation than as one of scholarship—and who can say that he is wrong? Yet I feel that we could estimate his work a shade more fairly, if he did not insist on decorating it with the familiar nomenclature of other universities with widely different objects. It was a shock, I mean, to be presented to a Professor of Landscape Gardening. It was an almost equal jolt to read in the college journal of a small Middle-Western town that

"the members of the class in art history spent Tuesday afternoon in . . . where they visited the art exhibit of the work of American painters which is being shown in the city art gallery. The commercial value of the paintings ranged in price from \$600 to \$6,000."

That naïve announcement might tempt one to belittle their instructors, so long as one regarded the institution as a college in the familiar Eastern or European sense. But once envisage it as an industrious and devoted Secondary School, engaged in imparting the elements to an agricultural population, and you will realise its solid value. You may not even raise an eyebrow, when informed (in the same journal) that a *plébiscite* in the English Department brought out *Ben-Hur* as the most popular book, with *Les Misérables*, *Tess*, *Jane Eyre*, and *The Covered Waggon* among the also-rans, while Dickens was voted the most popular author, winning from a field consisting of Lew Wallace, Victor Hugo, Thomas Hardy, and Zane Grey.

Two facts emerge—the devotion of the American scholar and the gallant effort of the State Universities. It is easy enough to ridicule college theses upon preposterous subjects or Chairs with absurdly lofty titles. (I believe there is somewhere in the Union a Professor of Advanced Thought.) But that is not the point. We may judge Eastern universities by

European standards ; and they will stand the test. But the absorbing business of American education lies in the elementary schools and, on the secondary grade, in State Universities. That is where the broth of the melting-pot swirls round ; and there, perhaps, the brew will find its solvent, the blind men their leader.

SLEEPY HOLLOW

ONE would have noticed it, I think, even without the inscription. For a large picture of the Taj Mahal is noticeable almost anywhere. But when it is rather more than a foot in width and runs clear across the entire page of a newspaper, it can scarcely be avoided. Besides, the letterpress had seen to that. "THE TAJ MAHAL," it cried in capitals that were almost audible, "COMES TO CHICAGO," adding in helpful parenthesis, "The World-famed Mausoleum at Agra, India." A note in the top corner, among the minarets, supplied the further information that it was "The Most Glorious Structure of the Ages."

I was quite plainly in the presence of no ordinary announcement. So much, at least, was clear from the highly unusual accompaniment of some blank verse by Sir Edwin Arnold, which filled another quarter of the sky above the Taj. There were nineteen lines of it; and as my previous acquaintance with this gifted writer was lamentably imperfect, I read them all. A little sensual, it seemed to me. There was a passage about

"the curves and shades
Of the white breasts of her it celebrates,"

which, I feared, would not be permitted to come to Chicago with the rest of the building. But below this perilous excursion into the realm of letters we were on solid ground again. For a plain sentence stated in simple prose that "Here, on the 111th Street Highway this great Temple will stand, alone in its beauty and symmetry." A sudden fear shot through me. Had the Government of India, in some moment of unparalleled enterprise or inadvertence, really sold the Taj? After all, transactions of the kind were not unknown; and even governments may yield to temptation.

But I was soon reassured. For underneath the pool, where a lady in fashionable clothes appeared to insist on photographing a water-lily in spite of her male companion's efforts to distract her attention in the direction of the Taj, there were two names. "Edgar A. Rossiter," I read, "Structural Engineer; Hugo Schmidt, Architect." A large italic added comfortingly, "*The Most Stirring Enterprise Ever Contemplated—The Duplication of a Wondrous Architectural Feat of Three Centuries Ago.*" So that was all.

The Briton in me breathed again. I wished the very best of luck to Mr. Schmidt and Mr. Rossiter in their heroic enterprise. The replica, it seemed, was to be executed in "white granite, marble and reinforced concrete, with ornamental bronze gates and fixtures"; and considerable prominence was to be given to "the sacred flowers of the Orient, the Lotus and the Iris, and the modern rose" in the scheme of decoration. What could be more tasteful? My kindling fancy learned in a happy glow that "the leaves, buds, and stems will be enamelled in their natural colours and will lend charm, beauty and warmth to the design of the structure." But a larger type summoned me to the centre of the page, where some unnamed stylist distilled his rhapsodies in language that deserves quotation. "Poets," he cried, "have paused in sheer ecstasy to describe its sublime charm." (This seemed a shade ungracious to Sir Edwin Arnold, who appeared capable of an extreme fluency on the subject.) "Artists have tried in vain to capture the perfect symmetry of its lines and angles"—hardly encouraging, I thought, for Messrs. Rossiter and Schmidt. "All who have gazed upon its amazing beauty have been lost in wonder. TAJ MAHAL!—the final resting-place of a great King and his Queen; the poetic expression in monumental structure of Divine Peace. And now, a lofty idea, long harbored, has been put into execution. To America—to Chicago—will be transported this dream of the East. . . . And before long will rise the Taj Mahal of the west with its inspiring dome and slender minarets." I am sure I hope so.

But I liked him best when he was practical. For this unknown poet, who might have written an epic of undertaking, could stoop his wing to detail that was positively domestic:

"Five thousand crypts have been planned. Rooms for families will contain from 4 to 20, and crypts may be had as low as \$250! Never before have crypts been offered so reasonably as here, where interments cost no more than outside burials.

"The receiving vault, now ready, will be used free of cost until the Mausoleum is completed. Space is being bought fast, and those interested are urged to lose no time in applying to us for full particulars."

I should think not, indeed. For who would miss a chance to secure, by prompt decease, a free spell in the receiving vault besides eternity in the Taj?

He was a really perfect host. A handy sketch-map showed that Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, where this miracle was to be erected (the commentator adding with slight malice that "there are no monuments to mar the scenery"), lay "with the great super-highways contemplated by the State and County . . . within an hour's ride of the entire County." But his consideration rose to its peak in the supreme announcement that "every modern appliance will be used, necessary to heat, ventilate and aerate the building, and many new features will be installed to assure safety and comfort." Which of us would not willingly be assured of a safe and comfortable Hereafter?

THE YOUNGER MARRIED SET

HE was reading a newspaper in the shade of an out-building. All round him, for three hundred miles in each direction, the endless distances of the Llano Estacado lay in the haze in which the Mission fathers found it, when they staked their trail across the Great American Desert with a faint line of little posts. Those patient Spaniards topped each finger-post with the hollow stare of a buffalo skull. For there were buffaloes in the land, when Don Francisco Coronado rode this way. But now it knew no other thunder than the morning train in which I rode securely, a sedentary Conquistador. We stopped for no apparent reason. Beyond the tracks the usual store adjoined the usual hotel. A check shirt came out to look at us and went in again ; and the invariable road ran dustily across the plain from the way-station to some unnamed place below the horizon. There was one figure, though, reading a newspaper in the shade of an outbuilding, And this is what he read :

"MARRIAGE OF LOCAL COUPLE IS SURPRISE"

The announcement which has been made by Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Hertner, of the marriage of their granddaughter, Elizabeth Spegal, to Dewey Morris, both of Amarillo, will come as a complete surprise to their many friends. Mr. and Mrs. Morris were married December 15, 1926, and for three months it has been kept a secret.

The bride is a graduate of St. Mary's Academy of 1925 and has grown to young womanhood in Amarillo. She is at present assisting Miss Grace Hamilton in her piano studies, where she is taking a music teacher's course under her.

The groom is the son of R. P. Morris, formerly of Amarillo. He is employed at the Central fire station, where he has held a responsible position for several years.

Mr. and Mrs. Morris are at home in their beautiful new home at 3504 South Polk Street. Both have a host of friends in the city who wish them well."

No stranger contrast awaits the enquiring European than this odd blend of Society intelligence with the Great Open Spaces. One had read before about a fireman's wedding. For firemen, as befits a race of heroes, are not wholly celibate even in Europe. Indeed, their nuptials form the subject of at least one rousing lyric, justly esteemed for public recitation. But in the Old World the theme was never treated with half so much social gusto.

Let it not be thought that the mood is one peculiar to Amarillo, Texas. For it prevails throughout the Union. The social columns of the morning papers pullulate with news of the Younger Married Set ; an envious eye is filled with an illimitable vista of Society Matrons and their doings ; nor is there any dearth of exclusive entertainments arranged by *débutantes*. Before whom they made their *début* or in what Drawing-room they dipped their ostrich feathers to what potentate, we may never learn. Nor can the European mind ever hope to fathom the social niceties of the more cryptic category of "sub-debs." (Small wonder that Henry James, resolved to paint a social scene, fled to the simpler classifications of the Old World.) But there they are. As one reads the Society page, a hierarchy of immense complication rises upon the astonished gaze ; and the light that beats on Belgravia or the Faubourg seems to pale by comparison with the white blaze projected by transatlantic journalism upon its favoured few.

Are they, indeed, so few ? To minds accustomed to the more restricted castes of Europe, their very numbers would appear to be quite the strangest feature of the whole exhibition. For in this freer air all men (or very nearly all) are "clubmen," and so many functions are graded as "exclusive" that one is left politely wondering who remains to be excluded. You recall the paragraph of the *Gopher*

Prairie Weekly Dauntless in Mr. Sinclair Lewis' realistic fancy, which stated that the bride's family "are socially prominent in Minneapolis and Mankato." It is a baffling scene. If you like easy explanations, you may conclude that it is mainly due to a mere accident of terminology; that American journalism, I mean, has just imported its social vocabulary in bulk from Europe without particular regard to the meanings that it would bear when it arrived in the New World. For manifestly terms that are apt enough at Deauville may read a trifle differently when applied to Red Dog or Yuba Dam. That, however, is a rationalist's conclusion; and I dislike the uneventful argument of rationalists—it is always far too reasonable to be true. Besides, I prefer to see a deeper meaning in the immense social proliferation of the United States. Surely this universal prevalence of Society Hostesses indicates that the Republic has at last performed successfully its noble task of levelling. Its enemies (and some of its friends, as well) proclaimed that it would level down. But, as we see, their hopes are gloriously disappointed. For it has levelled up; and all society is now in Society.

The unpleasing modern would, of course, prefer a more tortuous explanation in his own nasty manner. He, I am perfectly convinced, would wish to see a demonstration of the questionable truths of psycho-analysis. Quoting the tragic instance of the maiden lady who . . . (but why particularise?), he will undoubtedly ask us to believe that something darker lies behind the innocent American taste for ranks and grades and hierarchies, for Klansmen and Knight-hoods of Columbus. These, he explains, are the mere substitutes for something lost beyond recall and craved for without end, for the ranked society of squire and peer and bishop which the Fathers of the Republic put bravely behind them in their great experiment. Perhaps their sons are less austere and with the tendency (once so fatal to Lot's wife) of looking over their shoulders at regretted scenes. If so, we may recognise dream-duchesses in the Society

Matrons and princes-that-might-have-been in the Younger Married Set.

I doubt it, though. Whole nations are unlikely to comply with Freudian psychology. Besides, how much more pleasant to believe that the guiding impulse in these eccentric verbal exploits is a sort of delicacy, a republican chivalry of labour which describes the fireman as "employed at the Central fire station, where he has held a responsible position for several years." This exquisite refinement rose, I think, to its greatest heights in the following announcement :

**"LADY BANK ROBBER, LOVELY PRISONER :
RELEASED SUNDAY**

Sioux Falls, S. Dak., Apr. 1.—(AP)—Marian Meyers, 19, sentenced to 30 days in the state penitentiary here for attempting to rob a bank at Vermillion, has been such a model prisoner that she has earned five days off for good behaviour and will be released Sunday. Miss Meyers has not announced her plans after gaining her freedom."

What *grand seigneur*, flirting a handkerchief in the alleys of Versailles, could match the perfect chivalry of that last sentence? Matthew Arnold once shamed Victorian England by repeating as a sort of prose refrain one brutal sentence from a paragraph about a girl—"Wragg is in custody." Might not one string a lyric picture of the United States upon the happier line, "*Miss Meyers has not announced her plans after gaining her freedom* "?

The President sits in the White House ; the Supreme Court sits at Washington. *But Miss Meyers has not announced her plans after gaining her freedom.* Order and happiness smile upon the land from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico ; peace reigns in fifty million homes ; credit is steady, wheat abundant, cotton just short enough to support the market. *But Miss Meyers has not announced her plans . . .*

AMERICA IMPERATRIX

THE Narrows of the Hudson were still sliding past, as young men beset me with charming manners and the oddest choice of topics appropriate for interviews with a visiting historian. For they were gnawed with an unceasing passion for opinions on foreign affairs. Politely oblivious of the fact that fate had held me captive in mid-ocean for a week, sustained upon an unrewarding diet of wireless scraps, they seemed to ache like a thirsty land in summer for a downpour of definite statements on several international questions of the utmost delicacy. Why from me, I did not stop to ask. Any taxpayer, it seems, is good enough to expound the policy of his own Government—and, for the matter of that, of any other—in the hearing of this eager public. But cautious enquiry elicited the facts, at least, on which I was desired to comment. Whilst I had hung like Mahomet's coffin between two continents in mid-Atlantic, two states, it seemed, had both done the identical thing. One in the Old World and the other in the New had each been sending armed protection for its threatened traders. The coincidence was odd. But there, as I learned the facts, it was. For as the troop-ships drove eastward from Southampton taking the Guards to Shanghai, the U.S. Marines were trickling into Nicaragua. There was a strange resemblance between their missions, between the sailing-orders of the delight of London nursemaids and those legendary Marines, upon whose gallant heads the United States have concentrated almost all their latent militarism.

But there was a difference between the cases. There was, I learned from the mouths of my polite informants, a whole world of difference. I had not noticed it. But they seemed quite clear on the point. For it was this way. As the British troopers slid down Southampton Water and nosed

their way to Suez, they were propelled, it seemed, by all the crooked motives of the Old World. Kings chuckled, courtiers winked, and statesmen whispered evilly behind gnarled fingers at their going. It was (was it not?) a striking recrudescence of British imperialism—and what did I think about it? By way of answer I enquired politely for news of the U.S. Marines, those eager saviours of Central America from its baser instincts. As they slipped out of San Diego and turned towards Nicaragua, the sunshine (so I gathered) was on their foreheads. For they went about the blameless business of the New World. No sinister intent, no kings, no taint of selfishness; just business of the highest character, purely disinterested and quite legitimate—not even Big Business.

The contrast was instructive; and I did my best to profit by the lesson, to get the new perspective in the clear American light. A Guardsman ordered East to stand between a scared community and a resurgent China was (probably) the minion of some dark imperialistic design. Did he not wear a crown—and even a unicorn—upon his buttons? But a Marine ordered South to stand in precisely the same attitude before a far less adequate enemy was, beyond all doubt and guessing, beyond even Mr. Wilson's cherished "peradventure," a missionary of something immaculate. For it was unthinkable that broad-browed Washington should take the taint, the Old World taint, of imperialism.

I heard; I bowed the head; but even in this respectful posture, a haze of irreverent doubt began to rise. Was there, I wondered, some insidious form in which the creeping virus of imperialism might perhaps have entered the young veins of a New World? Marines and neutral zones, the mildly reasoned Note, the monthly, weekly, daily admonition from the State Department, the treaty of perpetual friendship—were these the latest technique of imperialism? Had Mr. Kellogg found a new way to commit old sins? The uneasy questions rose unanswered, and I walked hastily ashore.

Imperialism is, after all, a shifting thing. Its form has varied from one century to the next and, still more widely, from one continent to the next. In its first simple form it grasped at universal domination. Rome and her imitators were the first European masters of the art. To reduce the habitable globe (or plane) to a single allegiance was the simple object of the first imperialists. One law, one Senate, and one coinage seemed to be the aims of universal empire, as it was practised by the more aggressive Cæsars. The picture was inspiring ; and long after Rome had crumbled from Empire into papacy, it inspired the Romanisers—Charlemagne perhaps, and beyond a doubt Napoleon, that odd pastiche of Charlemagne and Augustus. That was the first and crudest form in which imperialism dawned on Europe. But even then there were wide variations between the practice of different continents. For while the Emperor hung Paris with captured flags, Jenghis Khan heaped a pile of heads before his door. Other continents, other manners. But within the limits of these regional variations, the aims of imperialism were identical, a single authority administering all the territory in sight. And in that ideal Napoleon was one with Nerva.

Europe, fragmented by the fall of Rome and still further atomised by the Reformation, was perpetually unfriendly to this simple design ; and history became a long record of resistance to ambitious projects of universal domination. It was the function, pre-eminently, of Great Britain to focus this temper of national independence and anti-imperialism. The British Isles slipped at a comparatively early stage from the Roman grasp ; they were an early centre of insurrection from Rome's successor, the universal Church ; Spain's slow encirclement of Europe and even of the world, the large design which grasped Madrid, Vienna, Brussels, North Italy, and even the Americas, was challenged by the carronades of Elizabethan seamen and foundered in the deep Hebridean waters which engulfed the Great Armada ; the French effort towards the same goal was foiled by Dutch William

with a British army, and crumbled finally before Marlborough and the troopers who “swore terribly in Flanders” under Queen Anne; the bull-rush of Napoleon was worn down by British sea-power and took the final blow from the cool matador who waited on the ridge in front of the little village of Waterloo; and the latest aspirant to universal empire, the hair-brained practitioner of every art but that of government who passes his days at Doorn, owes much of his solitary leisure to the British effort, which expended men, ships, and money in four years of splendid prodigality.

Such, in the roughest outline, is the record of universal domination in the last fifteen centuries of Europe's history. Much has been omitted. But as the shadows of Hildebrand, of Charlemagne, of Charles V, of Louis XIV, of Napoleon flit unregarded by, one fact emerges: Europe instinctively resists a single domination. This phase of imperialism, apart from its almost involuntary recrudescence in the German dream of empire, was ended in the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century. But in the years that followed, it found a mild successor. Resigning hopes of universal domination over the closely inhabited areas covered by the European state-system, nations began to grasp at the easier prize of overseas dominion. In this phase Great Britain led—unconsciously, as is the way of British thought in matters of extreme importance. Through the years which followed the diminution of the first British Empire by the secession of its American Colonies, a second British Empire was rapidly assembled. Much remained of its predecessor—the Canadas, India, and a rich supply of sugar-islands. But in the years of European conflict, which determined the defeat of the French design of universal domination, British policy reached out beyond the visible horizons of Europe and made a second Empire. South Africa, Ceylon, advancing frontiers within India itself, East Indies, and unrecorded islands in every sea observed the steady march of British control.

The tendency was largely undiscovered by Europe, still

AMERICA IMPERATRIX

interested in the checks and balances of its purely continental system. But it proceeded steadily in the years between Waterloo and 1870. Mainly unconscious, it resulted from the vague urge of population, of adventurous pioneers (for the Old World can show as many pioneer virtues as the New—is not the New World itself a monument to Old-World pioneering ?), of judicious traders in pursuit of export markets, of mere patriotism exhibited by enterprising captains, who hoisted a flag and read a proclamation of annexation in a circle of respectful natives. The process was scarcely observed by other Powers, though France was stirred to emulation by a recollection of former colonial ardours and the convenient proximity of Algeria. It has been called, for want of a better name, imperialism; and it rests undoubtedly on the desire to build an empire and on a belief that the empire's law is best for all within its circle. But the ideal which prompted it is something very different from the crude ambitions of the Cæsars and their less fortunate imitators. For it partakes largely of the humbler aspirations of the exporting trader, of the desire of Manchester to clothe the heathen in a sufficiency of Manchester goods, of the doctor's and the missionary's faith in the superior virtues of his own civilisation. And there is this broad distinction to be made between the imperialism of Cecil Rhodes and that of Julius Cæsar, that it flowed mainly to the empty spaces of the earth ; its goal was Bulawayo rather than the streets of Paris.

How far the world has gained or lost by a century of British expansion there is no need to appraise. The process of expansion is undoubted, and the beliefs behind it bear the simple collective title of imperialism. In its later stages the advance became a shade less confident. Where once the world had seen a bold series of annexations and frontiers had advanced quite unashamed, it began to observe the more diffident method of the Sphere of Influence, of suzerainty, of politely concealed Protectorates. No more the proclamation in the awed circle of natives, the flag fluttering on

the tropic air, and the pounding salute. Now frontiers advance more delicately, a little in the manner of the lamented Agag. For imperialism was becoming less sure of itself, less certain of the blessings of good government and ordered commerce ; and its tone became most apologetic.

I may be wrong. But in the latest devices of American policy I seem to detect a further shading of the bold imperialist design, a method of approach to the desired objective more delicate than Agag's. For methods vary with the march of time, and their variations are all in the direction of an increasing gentleness. The modern statesman annexes almost with a gesture of motherhood. His sterner predecessors, confronted with a prize, incontinently grabbed it—his grandfather by simple annexation, his father by a rigmarole about Spheres of Influence. But the softer tread of our contemporaries disdains such brutal footsteps. It advances under cover of a vigorous protestation of belief in the essential independence of the coveted object—and to lend it money. An occasional landing-party of Marines may keep a watchful eye on the security, but always with a stern insistence that it is no property of theirs. As the game develops, the object of desire may be impelled (with perfect freedom of action, but one eye on the Marines) to enter a treaty of perpetual friendship and dependence with and upon the absorbing Power. There will be no vulgar annexation. That is precisely where the method of Naboth's vineyard differs from that of Wall Street.

Is this delicate technique the latest variation on the Old-World theme of imperialism ? I wonder, and am half inclined to think so. If so, I trust that the stern judges of the New World will be a trifle less severe upon the historical shortcomings of the Old. For they seem to be heirs to one, at least, of its vices in an attenuated form. Kid-glove imperialism is no more defensible on abstract principles of human justice than the full-blooded variety. Can we be sure that the United States, after a brief experiment in annexation, has not entered upon a more insidious form of

concealed imperialism? Such outspoken critics must not complain if they occasionally attract a touch of comment from a politely interested world. For what is more delightful to the convicted sinner than to detect at least one mote in his critic's eye? And the Old World is left with a slightly irreverent wonder whether the purities of the Monroe Doctrine are not lightly dusted over with the faintest film of imperial ambition. If so, there is room for hope that its adherents will be less critical of similar ambition in others. Others, at any rate, rejoice to see the young man following in father's footsteps—and trust that in the future he will be a trifle less severe on father.

Such were the half-formed doubts that rose as reporters told a traveller the news from Nicaragua and China, and the big ship slid up the Narrows towards the tall, unlikely towers.

A PEAK IN DARIEN

SILENCE, I understood, was customary on these occasions ; and, as a well-read Conquistador who knew his business, I was duly silent. Most people would have been, after three days consisting mainly of hurrying nine miles from Los Angeles to Pasadena to keep appointments, nine miles back again to dress for dinner, and a last eighteen before bed-time, with dinner itself as a dimly remembered interlude somewhere along the road. To say nothing of occasional journeys along the Pilgrims' Way that leads to Hollywood ; of a candle burnt at lunch-time before the shrine of Miss Gloria Swanson ; of Mr. Fairbanks' all-embracing smile ; of the "Blue Boy" looking a little greenish in his distant home ; of the Sierra Madre carved on the sky, film-studios at work, and Californian hillsides ablaze with flowers.

This slightly flurried Odyssey left me a trifle breathless. Southern California, indeed, was almost too much for her admirer, since she had flung him, like an agitated shuttle, backwards and forwards across the lovely loom of hills and gardens that surround La Puebla de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles, which the heathen call Los Angeles, leaving visitors in some uncertainty as to whether the "g" is hard or soft. I was a little out of breath. So if silence was obligatory, I was quite willing to oblige. Stout Cortes could not have been more silent.

The morning train wandered uncertainly away from this hospitable maelstrom through an Italian landscape. Some genial lunacy had named a station "Chatsworth" ; but the hills of Derbyshire were far indeed from that translucent sunshine, and there was a welcome absence of dukes. Instead, the tall sierras of the San Bernardino Range stared loftily above our heads, as we puffed slowly northward in their shadow. One looked up at them, reflecting with a

mounting thrill that they could see something hidden from us. For as we wandered through the fields, the hills above were looking out to sea—to Hawaii, the Philippines, and China. So we sat on in an agreeable tension. Who could repress the very slightest quiver at a delicious sense of the Pacific waiting round the next corner? That, of course, is where one had a slight advantage over stout Cortes; for as he scaled his peak in Darien, Cortes was wholly unaware of what was coming. Not so his wise successors. No peaks for them, and no surprises; but a Pullman on the morning train to Santa Barbara. For posterity always travels in greater comfort. An exasperating man made despairing efforts to sell us sun-glasses; the retina, he said . . . But who wanted sun-glasses, with a prospect of the Pacific to look at? The train proceeded as uneventfully as though it had been bound for Brighton. Tickets were asked for; and one had an angry vision of obtuse conductors punching tickets for the Islands of the Blest. Small stations in the sunshine interposed wholly unnecessary delays. Deluded passengers got out—we saw them positively leave the train before they ever got a sight of the Pacific. More stations . . . further eloquence on the subject of sun-glasses . . . would the line, one began to wonder with Macbeth, stretch to the crack of doom? There were some trees along the track; and, a little tired of waiting, we looked at them instead. And suddenly, between the trees, it stepped into sight—the blue Pacific lying, broad and a little still, full in the morning sun.

I make no pretence of knowing what the first sight of Europe means to a traveller, since I saw it first out of a nursery window without memorable emotions. But the dim mass of Africa climbing up the sky beyond the edge of Spain is worth a journey for the sight of it. So are the big Atlantic rollers, where they come riding in to shore from Newfoundland and fill English ears with the last whisper of America. Echoes of richer quality sound in the pale Pacific surf—of Foochow and Samarang and Sourabaya; of thin

Hawaiian music in the shade of Mauna Loa and gongs slowly beaten at Saigon ; of unlikely airs fluted on pipes, the thud of drums behind Malay stockades and, faint and far, the voice of China. The little twinkling waves along those Californian beaches had once reflected ships in harbour at Manila or run through Macassar with the tide ; strange towers in Chekiang had looked into them ; and they had slept in the shade of sleeping trees beside the mouth of rivers in Borneo. For the Pacific is the road to romance, lying between the New World and the oldest.

But oceans are not there merely to be looked at : they should be swum in. Besides, unnatural foresight had provided us with the appropriate attire ; had we not brought it all the way from England expressly to be dipped in the Pacific ? It somehow seemed to twinkle less, as one approached across the sand ; and was it quite so blue ? The season was a trifle early, and a breeze swept the coast as briskly as an English beach. Then one recalled a little ruefully that stout Cortes had been less venturesome ; for that judicious man remained, if recollection served, upon his peak in Darien. But Conquistadores must not hesitate. We plunged ; and in the plunge we half expected to encounter sandalwood and myrrh and all the scents of the Spice Islands. Instead, we met something very like the English Channel, only a little colder. The long waves stole gently in to left and right ; the green flanks of the Santa Ynez Mountains smiled down at them (and us) with a vague reminiscence of the Italian Riviera. (Even the landscape of Santa Barbara seemed as travelled and charming as its population.) But what was that in front ? A vague hint of coast-line came through the sea haze. Had Asia come to meet us ? But half-way across we turned back to California before we ever made our landing on the Chinese coast, to learn with mild regret that there are islands in the Santa Barbara Channel. So we had not seen Asia after all. But still, we had gone one better than stout Cortes : he never bathed in the Pacific.

GLAD TIDINGS

It was to be an evening of peculiar rejoicing at Angelus Temple. For Sister Aimée was restored to us after her absence in the East. The unholy whispered that New York had been a trifle less responsive than might have been expected. But her telegram from Dallas, Tex., bore triumphant witness :

Met at train in Dallas by singing throngs in white uniforms with welcome banners. Alfords and Fire chief officially welcoming. Building seating fifty-three hundred filled to-night with wonderful people . . .

And now she was to be at home once more, in her own Temple under the famous unsupported concrete dome, which Los Angeles believed to be the largest in the world. Small wonder that the front page of the *Foursquare Crusader* caroled its welcome :

Together we have held the fort
And have done our very best
While you were away preaching,
Vacationing and having rest.

The last line, even with its extra foot, barely sufficed to give an adequate account of Sister Aimée's activities in the past fifteen months. Had she not lived in a splendid whirl of mysterious disappearances and litigation, crowned by the silencing of all (or nearly all) her envious rivals and a triumphal progress through the East ? It was not surprising that Dallas had turned out to meet her train in white with welcome banners. But Los Angeles must do still better.

Did it, I wonder ? There was something a shade dispirited in the crowd assembled under the concrete dome

that evening. They were still trooping in off the Sunday streets, and the Temple band was playing *Poet and Peasant*. Perhaps that invariable overture of Suppé's is a little lacking in spiritual quality ; or else there were too many sightseers present among the worshippers. The place was full enough. But new arrivals seemed to look about them a little strangely at the blue-gowned ushers, at the rousing banners round the gallery, and the big stage set for the illustrated sermon. The overture died down ; and as the choir filed into seats above the stage, Suppé was succeeded by Delibes, Delibes by Gounod. We sat reading our copies of the *Foursquare Crusader* to the slightly secular strains of the " Soldiers' Chorus." It was a businesslike periodical, full of brisk evangelical announcements, reports of healing, and statistics of anointed handkerchiefs " carefully taken care of by Sister Helen Bopst " and returned by the Prayer Department after being " prayed over by Mother Kennedy, assisted by the visiting pastors from the Branch churches, Brother Arthur and the Elders of Angelus Temple." There was a serial entitled *Out of the Jaws of Hell, being the Life Story of Mary Elizabeth Sullivan, formerly known as the " Queen of the Dope Ring," now proudly rejoicing as a " Daughter of the King,"* which opened with a singularly alluring synopsis :

" Raised in a home where the teachings of Ingersoll had supplanted the Bible, married in her teens to a drunkard, Mary Elizabeth was shot and frightfully wounded by her husband, who then committed suicide. After spending two years in hospitals she was reunited with her mother and her baby son, only to discover that while under surgical treatment opiates had turned her into an incurable dope addict. Trying cure after cure without success, she finally succumbs to her apparent fate ; takes up life on a houseboat and becomes a 'fence' for a group of gangsters."

This powerful warning against matrimony, surgery, or life on houseboats was plainly deserving of attention. In the current instalment the heroine (who carried a sawed-off

shot-gun and seemed to keep a pair of bulldogs) was discovered smoking opium on deck after "acting upon a hunch, she did not want to have any stolen property aboard that night" and dropping her booty overboard, "carefully marking the spot with a broken twig."

But these feverish delights were interrupted by the arrival of Sister Aimée. She had entered unobtrusively and now, a pleasant-looking lady with a good deal of carefully arranged fair hair, was sitting in a big chair on the stage. She clasped a Bible and was draped in a long dark-blue cloak. A telephone stood at her elbow, and the waiting microphone of Radio K.F.S.G. was just in front. An alarming backcloth depicted greenish fiends in flight from angels with trumpets ; and the space between it and her chair was almost filled with three life-size crosses. No effigies hung on them ; but the construction gang (whose achievements were celebrated in the *Foursquare Crusader*) had gratified their sense of realism by driving three enormous nails into the middle cross and decorating their vicinity with liberal splashes of red paint.

Against this slightly garish background Sister Aimée read a short passage of Scripture, led the Temple in a hymn with a good deal of practised brightness and sat waiting, a demure figure in dark blue, while the musical programme drew slowly to its end. A lady played the xylophone ; a baritone rendered some sacred music ; and once, when a quartette was singing, she turned the microphone away—a shade uncharitably, I thought. Then she rose to preach and continued for about an hour. The earlier portions of the sermon, which were carefully composed and had reference to the scene set on the stage, seemed slightly strange to her ; some awkward words in it, that she appeared to encounter for the first time, gave her a little trouble. But the illustrated sermon had its unerring accompaniment. For, guided by insight or by lighting-cues, the electrician followed her argument from point to point about the stage. The sympathetic magic of lime-light lent its aid ; and as the

preacher alluded to each item of the scene behind her, it was illuminated in appropriate colours. Her closing passages were more revivalist ; her arms went up ; and as they rose above her head, the big blue cloak parted to reveal a trim figure in white. The gathering was invited to participate, to join in concerted ejaculations, to raise hands for this or that. When the response was poor (and hands went up a little sparsely in the two big galleries), she gave delighted thanks for numbers wildly in excess of reality. There was a final call to the platform, a stampede of eager ushers down the gangways ready to shepherd penitents up to the stage. Coat-sleeves were plucked ; neighbours became officious. But they mounted slowly ; and we left them kneeling on the stage before the routed fiends, real figures in black coats among the scenery, while Sister Aimée smiled her brilliant smile above the bowed shoulders.

POOR LITTLE RICH BOY

It was a thrill, of course, when the big front door swung slowly open and disclosed a profile that one had known since childhood. Not that we knew the butler. For the butlers of the American great, though invariably British, are so episcopal as to be known to few except the other members of the Athenæum. We did not even know our host. But then one never did. Hospitality, in a charming and altogether novel fashion, preceded friendship in the New World. You presented "letters"; doors flew open; and you dined with total strangers—but you said good-night to friends. That day we did not know our host from Adam, though we had gathered from the drive that, like Adam, he appeared to live in Eden. Yet as the big front door swung open, it disclosed a face that one had known for years. She sat her throne, as proud as ever; and as she took the pose, Sir Joshua's drapery billowed round her. For on the afternoon we made a call in Pasadena, our respects were paid to Sarah Siddons.

Our host (alas, a host no longer) presented us; and presences no less familiar smiled down from other walls—some in Mr. Romney's favourite satin, some in the big, drooping hats that Gainsborough loved to paint. They seemed to wait for us in the still walks of English gardens, leaning lightly against urns; and as we sipped our tea and talked about the train-service, we longed to tell them all the news—that London was still London, although the Mall was sadly changed and they would look in vain along Piccadilly for Devonshire House; that no one now played ombre, and mantua-makers preferred a meagre mode; that poor Lord North had got his way and lost the American Colonies in spite of all that Mr. Burke could say; that Charles Fox had died a minister and the Prince of Wales married a German

princess after all ; that Samuel Johnson was remembered ; that the town stretched far into the fields past Tyburn ; that Mr. Walpole finished Strawberry Hill and succeeded to the title ; and that the sentries still wore scarlet at St. James's. How they must ache for news from home, those elegant exiles from the Eighteenth Century imprisoned in their frames beyond the Rocky Mountains.

Yet their regrets were not apparent. They smiled so bravely in the Californian light. One might almost think that they had caught no whisper of the outcry occasioned by their emigration. For as each of them left home, the English streets were loud with lamentation. Ardent patriots, who had never bothered to leave cards on them when they had the chance, accused them roundly of deserting England. But had they ? They had left it, of course ; but mere departure is not always quite the same thing as desertion. May one not fancy that the English name is served by such ambassadors abroad ? Greece, after all, is honoured in the Elgin Marbles ; so why not England in her exiled Gainsboroughs ? That, at any rate, is how they seem to carry it off ; and as the rosy gentlemen smiled at their satin ladies, the distant gallery became a sort of embassy, a piece of England.

Indeed, if there is anything a little wistful, one seems to see it in their custodians. For somehow the collector is himself collected ; wishing to possess these figures of the English past, he is possessed by them. Those high-coloured ladies have had so many servants in their time that their latest owner seems to be just one servant more. For while they endure unchanging, they change their servants just as they always used to. That is the fancy that grew strongly upon one, as a gracious owner exposed his treasures. The pointing figure on the floor, that secured a few years of pride from living in their household, seemed so ephemeral. But the bright smiles upon the canvas, these endured. One could feel almost sorry for the connoisseur. He makes his acquisition, scores his little triumph, and flits by. Shadows

we are, as Mr. Burke informed the Bristol electors ; but are they always shadows that we pursue ? For though the connoisseur may pass, the tall gentlemen in knee-breeches converse for ever across the gallery with the rouged ladies, the little children smile their elfish smiles, and Siddons sits on superb.

THE MAD CATHEDRAL

THE nave was quite sublime. Dim vistas on each side hinted at transepts ; and one of the roofs that Piranesi drew towered into the darkness, though possibly the hand of Mr. Joseph Pennell had added some of the cords and scaffoldings that hung from it. Outside the sun was shining ; and one had a sense of passers-by hurrying across a Parvis in the shadow of a big West Door. For here, beyond all doubt, was a cathedral. We had not noticed one in Hollywood. But faint music hung about its aisles ; busy worshippers trotted towards side-chapels ; and one turned at every moment to catch the glow of a great rose-window. A woman drifted by with her hair loose about her shoulders. It seemed a little odd. And then the chapels were so queer. There were no altars ; and in one of them a young man in evening dress with a pink shirt-front and a fez was whispering inaudibly, with a look of nameless evil, to a draped figure on a divan. His lips kept moving, but there was no sound ; perhaps the music drowned it. It was a queer cathedral, where men in shirt-sleeves perched in the chancel, directing cruel lights upon a silent choir dressed in the oddest clothes, while precentors in eye-shades stooped above their missals. There were deserted chapels filled with forgotten architecture, with palace gates, with Mexican hillsides, with cottage interiors ; and electric cables lay about the floor like sleeping snakes. Yet in that noble nave one could never quite escape the sense of a cathedral. A shrill bell might sound at any moment and release a mad Jubilee procession of cowboys, cardinals, veiled ladies, negroes, Zouaves, and electricians. For the great film-studio resembled nothing more than a cathedral that had lost its senses.

We had lunched at ease in the Bishop's Palace. A smile of international fame had received us at the turnstile, and

we walked proudly in to lunch behind *The Black Pirate*. Nothing remains of that festivity except a gay, remembered whirl of conversation, lacquer, salads, and the tiny sculptured figure of Miss Gloria Swanson, carved like her own jade. Still reeling, we had crossed a sunlit path and entered the cathedral, made free of its wonders for the afternoon. We sat about on camp chairs that bore the names of "stars," and talked—yes, positively talked—to movie-actors. All round us, glued to their megaphones, sat film-directors, breeched, booted, and almost spurred. I had never understood why those dynamic men find it essential to adopt so equestrian a uniform; and even now my uncertainty remains. Perhaps, the last romantics of the New World, they are still waiting, hopeful in spite of everything, for an Indian raid, prepared to leap on horseback and dash off, like Mr. Leacock's hero, in all directions.

Other mysteries greeted our reverent and delighted gaze. For hours, it seemed, a dishevelled lady in an Eastern tale, walked down a passage, stared from an upper window, started in horror, and disappeared again. She did it beautifully each time; but if she did it once, I suppose she did it thirty times, whilst an insatiable director searched in vain for some hidden standard of perfection. And each time that she did it, music struck up and she proceeded to the opening bars of the "*Chanson Indoue*" from *Sadko*, promptly checked the very moment that she left her window. She might, of course, be helped by Rimsky-Korsakov to realise an oriental *mise en scène*. But what purpose was served by such endless repetition I never fathomed, except perhaps to impress performers with a sense of infinite directorial fastidiousness. Had I not already seen a small boy with a carefully blacked eye returning home *ad nauseam* to a humble cottage, where his mother smoothed his hair and bravely bore this intimation that their presence in the village was not wholly welcome? Each time the door swung open; each time she looked up from her knitting; and each time she folded him in an embrace of

infinite understanding. Even an eager layman, gloating over the richly alluring mystery of the movies, cannot endure such *longueurs* for ever ; and how the movie-actor bears the intolerable tedium, I cannot conceive. Before Hollywood received me, I had thought of him (and her) as quite the gayest figure of the modern world ; but I recall them now as Trappists, vowed to a wholly ascetic life of unbearable monotony.

But as the lady started for the eighteenth time at her upper window, our monotony was generously relieved. For we had company enough. Effendis drifted up for news of home ; Pashas of evil aspect accepted nervously-proffered cigarettes ; sergeants of Turcos explained that Hollywood, though dull, was better than Newport, Mon. ; and we discovered the hidden secret of the movies, that the great American industry is filled to overflowing with cheerful Englishmen. So we sat talking, with the lights searing our eyes and directors bawling " Camera " down megaphones, while Rimsky-Korsakov spasmodically evoked the Orient under the noble spring of the big roof, that irresistibly recalled a mad cathedral.

FANTASIA ON A HOPI DANCER

My hostess's eye swerved for an instant ; and, that guardian orb averted, the determined man descended on me like a stooping falcon. We were all talking harmlessly enough after a charming dinner. But he had been waiting all the evening, quite intolerably full of politics ; and now his moment, like von Moltke's at Sadowa, had arrived. (I record him merely as an isolated episode, as the one untypical American who very nearly turned me for ten minutes into that rarest of all portents, the typical Englishman—a friend of his, I subsequently learned, had just been elected Mayor of Chicago on the strength of possessing the same peculiar qualities.) Not his the mild enquiry on the dole or Mr. Lloyd George's war-chest or the private life of Mr. Gladstone, which had been the friendly staples of American conversation upon English topics. He went for larger game. For, calling all history to be his witness with one sweeping gesture, he asked me what they (meaning his countrymen) had got out of the War. The shattering question came at me out of a blue of gentle after-dinner talk. As I did not know the answer, I made none ; but avoiding his accusing eye, I struggled faintly to return to the harmless interchange of hotel experiences and sleeping-car adventure, which are the current coin of international friendship. (I imagine that Foreign Ministers link nations at Geneva by swapping tales of Pullman porters.) But my tormentor, strong in the justice of his cause, persisted. I felt that, wasted in this social *milieu*, he would have found his level in the Senate. Perhaps he has by now—gone to his long account under the iron dome at Washington. He taxed me with a British Empire bloated, it seemed, with its war-profits, gorged with vast mandated territories, with the deep argosies of Palestine, to say nothing of the Bismarck

Archipelago, that Eldorado of the South Pacific. I saw my hostess looking a little anxious, signalled reassurance, and parried gently. But in me, politely huddled in one corner of a sofa, he seemed to see all tyrannies embodied—King George's Hessians, the bloody hand of Cromwell, rack and stake, the fires of Smithfield, and General Maxwell's firing-parties. At intervals he remembered India with a rich particularity. I suppose I should have answered. But if there is one quality that I dislike in guests, it is historical repartee. Besides, eloquence is so narcotic ; and I believe I dozed. The rich catalogue proceeded ; but, for me, the listening circle faded . . .

Another took its place. That was a circle too ; but this time it was a standing circle, ranged under a tall sky to watch something at its centre. I suppose I must have seen it somewhere, and his refrain had somehow charmed it back again. He mentioned Indians, I think. The circle stood and watched ; behind them a mad landscape lay in a still convulsion, where an Arizona sunset looked over the rim of the Grand Canyon and turned cold. The ring stood staring towards its centre, where a drum thudded with a queer, arrested beat ; and I craned to see as well. The drummer sat behind his drum, backed by two standing women. A pair of bare-headed dancers jigged at a sort of dog-trot, and alongside of them two dismal travesties of braves in war-paint—shield, tomahawk, and eagle-feathers—crouched and pranced with dispirited ululations. They pranced so dutifully in the fading daylight. Then the prancing checked for a moment, and the feathered chief (for surely the enterprising railway company must have supplied us with a chief) announced without emotion that the next dance would be a prayer for rain—" for rain that is very necessary to our stock-raising and agriculture, *and rain is very scarce on our Reservation.*" He spoke without the faintest bitterness, and the watching circle scarcely seemed to listen. Then the drum was thudding once again, and the dull eyes came round

in the wooden faces . . . "*very scarce on our Reservation.*" It was colder now, and an evening chill began to steal up out of the Canyon. The drumming died away; a coin or so fell into the ring; and the circle melted. For we had a train to catch, the Rockies and the Great Plains to traverse, a whole continent to cross . . . "*scarce on our Reservation.*"

THE TILTED CITY

ROME sits, they tell me, on seven hills ; and so, though I never counted them, does San Francisco. The only difference is that San Francisco seems as if she might slip off at any moment. A morning train decanted me into the city. But before I was half-way to my hotel, I was gasping at those vertical hillsides which had even scared the impassive Baedeker into comparing the local traffic to flies on a window-pane. My taxi mounted to the assault like a storming-party ; its vitals roared ; its nose explored the sky. I watched my feet mount slowly level with my eye. Alongside of me the cable-cars pursued their vertical career running, as Mr. Rudyard Kipling saw them, " up and down a slit in the ground." It must be very nearly forty years since that observant youth, just off the Yokohama boat, watched them " slide equably on their appointed courses from one end to the other of a six-mile street." The young man's eye was sharp enough ; so was his tongue. But there is one point on which I can supplement his observation. He saw the San Francisco street-cars that " turn corners almost at right angles, cross other lines, and"—with a slight touch of hesitation—" for aught I know may run up the sides of houses." They do. If they did not, they would never get there. For San Francisco is one glorious defiance of the laws of gravity. Streets, that should run level with the earth's surface, climb without warning into heaven or fall away with equal suddenness into the waters under the earth, leaving pedestrians to gasp on the edge of a sheer drop ; I estimate that a cent dropped on the crest of California Street would gather speed enough to kill a horse in Market Street, unless it hit a Chinaman on Grant Avenue ; and some feral magic had glued to the very summit of the city a vertical hotel, whose windows offer to incredulous

eyes a stupendous mirage of house-tops ending in the blue Bay, the little islands in the Bay, and the green hills beyond. But I was always half afraid that San Francisco would slip off her hills into the water. If she did, I should certainly run to pick her up ; and I feel quite sure that she would lie charmingly in one's arms for just an instant before saying "Thank you." It will be gathered that, where Mr. Kipling fell to a "big Kentucky blonde" and seven maidens more (including one Greek profile raised on beer), I fell in love with San Francisco.

The avowal seems impulsive. But what European could resist the sense, after many days and nights, of being back in the world again ? To be in Keokuk, where the trains run to Peoria or to Dubuque, is to be in a dream ; Bloomington is scarcely more convincing ; and what could well be more insubstantial than Little Rock ? But from here the steamers go to Singapore and Honolulu and Yokohama and Shanghai, into reality once more. The Old World stretches out an arm to claim its wandering child. Not that San Francisco is in any discreditable sense Old-World. For its tradition is quite magnificently of its own continent, with a fine profusion of Vigilantes, Forty-niners, and the corner of Washington and Montgomery where Casey murdered King of the *Evening Bulletin*, and the gallows on Sacramento Street, where they hanged the murderer to an audience of "3,000 stand of muskets and two field-pieces." Yet something older hangs in the air. You cannot call a barracks the Presidio with impunity ; and if you carefully preserve the adobe walls of a Mission of Our Lady of the Weeping Willows, it will have spiritual consequences, even though you get there by the 16th Street cars and find it on the corner of Dolores.

So San Francisco is not quite the young embodiment of Western womanhood, before whose shrine (not forgetting the big Kentucky blonde and the Greek profile) young Mr. Kipling delighted to "roast a battered heart" in 1889. Not that she shows her years—was I unchivalrous enough to

hint it? For she stands up, between Oakland and the Golden Gate, as young as the latest city summoned by oil out of the soil of Texas—and far better educated. But her eyes (I am going the way of Mr. Kipling again) are deep with memories. Remembered things haunt San Francisco—Drake and his Bible, the Mexicans, the Russian traders, the old sinfulness, and the gay bravery of 1906 when William James drifted volubly through the settling dust, clasping a box of Zu-zu gingersnaps and making psychological observations among the earthquake-stricken crowds. But where do memories haunt her more persistently than on a long street slashed round the steep escarpment of a hill, where the hanging lanterns have a new shape? Or is it the oldest shape of all? For there, behind the yellow faces in the little shops and on the corners of the sidewalks, what memories come crowding—memories of alleys in Canton, of queer sails reflected in the Yangtze, of still Buddhas in the distant sunshine, of the glow of painted silk and the pallor of jade. Chinatown is only a memory, recalling China much as an air tapped painfully from a piano recalls the surge and swell of a great orchestra. But even the replica recalls the glory of the original; and Asia hangs on the air of Grant Avenue, where the little dragons grin and joss-sticks burn and provision-merchants stock the most unlikely delicacies. Not being Mr. Kipling, one was not privileged to witness a midnight assassination through the smoke of opium. I got, indeed, no nearer than a little crowd that stood respectfully with a policeman round an upturned pair of boots; these noted, I withdrew. But all the air was heavy with the Old World calling; and as it called, I turned to it again. For we had crossed America and come out on the other side.

THE FILM RUNS BACKWARDS

(*Transcontinental*)

ONE sunny afternoon it started. For the first time in months we were going East ; and with the thought we were a little solemn. As the big car slid forward, all the faces in the porch faded into the shade behind them and California became a memory. Not quite a memory, though ; for there was still the ride to San Francisco, to say nothing of seven hundred miles or so of assorted Paradise and desert that lay between us and Arizona. All down the road, where Santa Clara waved plum-blossom at us in a still farewell, the Sunday crowds in every size and shape of automobile responded to unnumbered invitations to chicken dinners ; taller than ever in the spring evening, the big redwoods at Palo Alto watched the dark river of their shadows ; and the empty streets in their Sabbath mourning seemed just a little sorry to see us go. We took a sad farewell of the Pacific in her largest, bluest oysters and strolled, uneasy wanderers with a night train to catch, through Chinatown. But another East was calling. The rueful little walk concluded ; and, alone with our luggage, we dropped down the hill towards the station.

The big ferry moved punctually across the Bay ; and behind us the tall city lights, like open windows on the sky, all turned to watch us go. A line of Pullmans waited in the hushed darkness of the station ; our invariable darkey, guardian of Cæsar and his fortunes, received his guests ; and the long train pulled out for Europe. A night slipped by ; and as we rumbled into daylight, the big hills along the San Joaquin glowed blue and yellow with wildflowers. But the desert claimed us ; and in the desert, being rash, we changed. We changed, to be precise, at Barstow, Cal., where the eager pen of Mr. Kipling once wrote of " engineers

. . . in their lonely round-houses," and Providence, with the easy largesse of a desert time-table, had given us three hours to wait. Three hours can be a longish time; and three hours in Barstow are, I conjecture, longer than most. I saw the lonely engineers, noted their round-houses and, wondering how many of God's creatures had ever been for a walk in Barstow, went for one. There is a fearful pleasure to be snatched from leaving stations at unlikely places. A strange attraction draws me to the untrodden fields surrounding railway-junctions; pioneers and Polar explorers have, I believe, the same sensation. Had I not, alone of the human race, taken a country walk at Bobadilla? I once visited a public park in Warrington between trains. And once, on a Sunday afternoon that is still remembered by the station staff, I left the Midland Railway Company's premises at Trent. So Barstow was a challenge. A lonely road wound uninvitingly over an iron bridge; a shrunken river crept beside a singularly forbidding kopje; and a reddish vista indicated the desert, waiting to be conquered. But the desert won. Subdued, I crept towards the station and waited for the California Limited.

That dignitary thundered in, shut down her brakes, received me, and departed. The loving care of unseen powers provided an observation-car with all the magazines and headed notepaper, a barber's shop, a manicurist, and a highly decorated diner, in which we feasted while this sumptuous pantechnicon sailed gravely across the bleached horrors of the Mojave Desert under a ragged roof of storm-clouds. (Some delirium suggested that Mr. Fred Harvey, purveyor of all good things along the Santa Fé, must have a brother Mo, who does the deserts.) That night we saw the Hopis once again, selling their beads at Needles in the glare of station arc-lights, and said good-bye to California.

The big wheels ground slowly up the long Arizona grades; and morning found us drinking hot coffee in the snow along the rim of the Grand Canyon. All day we stared across that scarred immensity, whilst our obedient Pullman waited

in a siding. But in the evening we drew out again for Europe. Arizona handed us to New Mexico, and we were lulled with the long procession. Somewhere along the line an inconspicuous station announced the Continental Divide, where all the rivers began to flow (with us) towards the Atlantic. We saw the Navajos at Gallup ; our train, with ready courtesy, ran past the Indian houses of Laguna ; and we got out to stretch at Albuquerque. Another night followed another day ; and in the morning somebody announced that fresh trout from Rocky Mountain streams had come on board. So, as we ran across the corner of Colorado, we ate those miracles of catering ; and that night we slept in Kansas City.

When sense returned, it was a Friday morning—Good Friday in Kansas City. The sound is slightly austere ; but the reality was almost gay. For Missouri seems to celebrate Passion Week with open shops and crowds in the streets. True, one or two of the window displays appeared to strike a slightly devotional note ; and, unless hearing erred, the Salvation Army gathered beneath our window greeted its Maker with something not unlike a college yell. But it contrasted oddly with our Spanish Easter of a year before, with the full-throated anthems of Burgos and the long funeral march of hooded men that wound slowly through the fading light of a street in Saragossa, where the borne effigies swayed above the crowd. Somehow one had not thought before of European austerity in contrast with the *abandon* of the Middle West.

That night we took the road once more ; and all America seemed to flow past again in reverse order. There was the Mississippi, once seen far to the north as a sheet of broad steel lying between brown wooded banks under a brooding winter sky, where it flowed through Minnesota, homeland of Swedes and Finns and Letts and all the children of the Baltic—a slightly Baltic territory itself, flecked with snow and lacking only the little steeples and the bright cobalt of the sea. We saw Chicago again ; and as the clouds hung

low along the tall lake-front, we said farewell to Illinois. Once more, as California Limited transferred us to Twentieth Century, we passed the multiple Main Streets of Indiana. Farewell, farewell, the Middle West. There was Toledo, where the trains run north to Detroit and see the glow on the night over the Ford factory, where once I saw it from a plunging taxi in the snow. Farewell to Michigan. There was Cleveland, too, with the wind off Lake Erie, and the patient levels of Chataqua. All our travels seemed to rank themselves outside the Pullman window ; every memory that we had gathered came down to the station to see us off. We felt a little like Mr. Pitt, when he rolled up the map of Europe because he would not want it any more. Buffalo passed in the night ; and we woke in the Hudson Valley with a broad river sliding past and houses that clustered, grew together, and became New York.

One more departure waited, as a taxi stole down-town through the evening traffic to the dock. A roaring concourse ; lights and porters ; then a gang-plank ; flowers in a waiting state-room ; the familiar spaces of the ship ; a last word to brisk reporters in the big brown room that waited for to-morrow's dancers ; and the roar of ocean whistles. And so farewell, America. The piled and lighted city stood in the night outside. It veered a little, as we moved, and slowly slipped away. Then the lights receded ; and we were left to the dark Bay, the Narrows, and the open sea.

TANGO

To

STUART DAVIDSON	ROY FYERS-TURNER
MOSTYN DAVIES	DONALD JUPP
HUGH PUGH	JOHN MCGAVIN
PAUL STOBART	PETER REYNOLDS

and

E. MILLINGTON-DRAKE

VIATICUM

HE stopped me just as I was going down the quay to join my ship. Such of my few belongings as were not carried in a spotted handkerchief were in the box upon my shoulder ; and my bronzed face and slightly rolling gait proclaimed a sailor to the more observant passers-by. There were not many of them at that early hour. But even if there had been, the massive figure seated on a coil of rope outside the *Admiral Benbow* would have attracted my attention. An impressive tankard stood at his elbow, and several parrots decorated the outlying portions of his anatomy.

"Avast there," he observed without more formal preliminaries.

"Belay," I said mechanically, and came to a standstill in front of him.

He was an enormous man—or would have been if he could ever stand on his feet. But he could not, since one of them was missing, inadequately replaced by the most imposing wooden leg that I have ever seen. Raising the hook in which his right arm appeared to end, he fixed me with his sole remaining eye and prepared to speak again. A parrot with previous experience of his conversational manner shifted apprehensively on his shoulder.

"Young master," he began in tones appropriate to giving orders off Cape Horn after the speaking-trumpet has been blown overboard, "whither away? Art bound for the Spice Islands or Nombre Dios or the China Seas or Labrador or Cape Agulhas or the Spanish Main or Trincomalee or the Cays where Henry Morgan——"

Interrupting rudely, I broke the chain of his geographical reverie with a brief intimation that I was bound for the River Plate.

"Never mind," resumed my formidable interlocutor.

"Wherever 'tis, be warned in time. For wherever 'tis, you will inevitably write a book about it. I sit here on sunny mornings and watch them all go by, bound for the ends of the earth ; and they invariably write a book about it."

"Pieces of eight," one of the parrots on his shoulder remarked irrelevantly (and, I thought, a trifle rudely).

"But the warning," I enquired, "what is the warning ?"

The old ruffian's head was nodding in time to his thoughts. "I watch them all go by," he said, "go down the quay and aboard ship. They all step lightly as they pass, but—"

At the price of seeming rude I interrupted him again. "The warning," I demanded sharply.

His solitary eye gleamed for an instant ; and all the parrots huddled nervously together in anticipation. It came at last.

"*Beware of adjectives,*" he roared. "Beware of adjectives. I always tell them ; but they never listen."

And as I hurried down the quay, his voice still followed me, heavy with warning.

We sailed at midnight. The harbour lights grew dim behind us, and a slant of wind brought a faint murmur off the land. "Beware," it said, "of adjectives."

PASEO

MISNOMER

THE real attraction, as the big ship slides down Southampton Water and the ranked lodging-houses of the Isle of Wight stand stiffly to attention in a mute farewell, is that you have not got the vaguest notion of what it is that you are going to. Travellers to other destinations have few uncertainties. Bound for New York, the simplest of us knows precisely what he will find at the other end—a jagged skyline, Liberty erect on her pedestal, the Customs shed, black locomotives with cow-catchers, policemen twirling clubs in streets buried far out of sight between towering façades, traffic-signals, obliging darkeys in white jackets, and the familiar *mise en scène* of all the films that we have ever sat through. Rome holds no mysteries for passengers seated in *wagons-lits*, as the Rome express draws out of Paris and the big locomotive gathers speed, headed confidently for the night, Mont Cenis, and Modane. Even the East is still the unchanging East of all the folders we have ever read in shipping offices—Constantinople with its line of mosques, great stone bubbles on the sky flanked by the tall spears of Islam, or Port Said in sunshine, shaded decks slipping between the brown banks of the Canal, and a decorous arrival in Bombay anticipated in a score of opening chapters and a league of films of incoming Viceroys. Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America have yielded all their mystery, and any traveller who takes the trouble may know exactly what he is going to. But South America? As the chalk cliffs drop astern and the Channel opens out before him, who knows what he will find in South America? That is the real attraction.

For it must be confessed that earlier travellers have done

extremely little to satisfy our curiosity. Not that the Muses have neglected it, since the sub-continent is deeply penetrated by Mr. Tomlinson's richly adjectival tideway; and those enigmatic shores are washed by the waters of *Nostromo*, where the Isabels are mirrored in the tideless sea of Mr. Conrad's prose and the stormy denizens of Costaguana display a creditable knowledge of conversational Spanish. Yet in the last analysis how much remains beyond a general impression of a sub-continent that is extremely roomy and maintains a population of minor characters with an exasperating tendency to improve all occasions with a sententious murmur of "*¿ Quién sabe?* " A stevedore may be a more promising figure of romance, if we agree to call him Capataz de Cargadores; and any street would gain in dignity from a profusion of pulperías kept by posaderos for the entertainment of peons, whose burros whisk a drowsy tail in the sunshine of the plaza. But, however improving to our modern languages, such glimpses (like the livelier revelations of O. Henry) tell us extremely little about South America. Bathed in its literature, we emerge from our ablutions dripping with odds and ends of Spanish (a language, it would seem, containing far more nouns than verbs) and very little wiser than before. A rich feast of English prose is spread in our sight; but we rise from Mr. Hudson's with a vague notion that the whole sub-continent is one vast bird sanctuary, and from Mr. Cunningham Graham's with a livelier sense of an immense circus where Conquistadores, invariably well-connected, perform feats of doubtful equitation. That forms a meagre equipment for any traveller. But however hard he tries, his education will remain sadly neglected and he will not advance far beyond his first (and wholly inexact) impressions of the South American scene drawn from contemporary writers—white teeth, dark skins, the sudden shot, the point of honour, and a complicated libretto of operatic politics diversified by tropical diseases and exciting lepidoptera.

For the Muses, prodigal of the small change of local colour,

have somehow failed to hold the mirror up to South America. Perhaps the mirror was too small. Perhaps the sitter would not stay still long enough to have her portrait taken. Or possibly the Muses were exhausted by the first splendid effort which inspired Hakluyt's traveller to his tale of "another rich nation, that sprinkled their bodies with the poulder of golde, and seemed to be guilt, and farre beyond them a great towne called El Dorado." That strikes the authentic note of South American travel; and the note holds as clearly now as when it sounded on the ear of Sir Robert Duddeley, safe home in 1595 from the shoals called Abreojos and the isle of Bermuda, "and farre beyond them a great towne called El Dorado." That fairyland is still our goal, as the ship begins to lift a little to the Channel and the last gulls wheel home for England. For however industriously we stuff ourselves with Consular reports and figures about acreages under wheat or mileages of tram-lines or cubic feet of gas supplied to happy townspeople or metric tons of cereals spouted from elevators into the waiting grain-ships, we are bound far beyond them all for "a great towne called El Dorado."

Unhappily the modern dialect of El Dorado is a shade restricted. For it is mostly to be found in those secluded pages of the morning paper which come after all the rest and are most frequently (and sometimes a little prematurely) abstracted for household purposes. Happy the continent whose history is written in the City Column. But less happy its historian, since he will find considerable difficulty in assembling his material. Brief but authoritative (since the notice convening the annual general meeting has been read by the Secretary and the chair duly taken by the Chairman), such statements paint a meagre portrait. For the Muse of Throgmorton Street is a trifle stiff in the joints, and her picture of South America is almost as inadequate as those drawn by the more accomplished hands of literary gentlemen. Indeed, it leaves one with a bewildered notion that the Company's property is exceptionally rich in

quebracho and quinine, with copper somewhere in the offing and a good time coming when the long-standing controversy with the State of Santa Olalla about land-purchase is finally adjusted by the new administration. The population, it would seem, consists exclusively of local boards and labour supply whose combined efforts produce something normally described as progress. But that will hardly do for a really comprehensive portrait of a whole sub-continent.

Despair begins to settle on the student. Will he never find a satisfactory rendering of this elusive region? Its bibliography is highly impressive; and it would ill-become the writer of these scattered notes to reproach his more systematic predecessors. For devoted men have ploughed the seas and scaled the peaks; eager hands compile statistics in illustrated brochures; and the deep silence of provincial archives is broken by the scrape of learned pens. Have we not the life-work of Professor X., "that learned and painefull writer" (in Hakluyt's incomparable phrase)? Has not the intrepid Y., whose *Scrambles in the Higher Andes* are a sheer delight, revealed that "on reaching Camp 18 a scene beyond description lay before us"? Yet somehow South America fails to emerge; and as the little waves slip by, we have not the vaguest notion of what we are going to.

One formula persists, from which it might be possible to risk a guess about our destination. For writers, especially French writers, have an agreeable tendency to call it Latin America. What they mean is not altogether clear, since no dictionary contains a really satisfactory inventory of Latin qualities. They are, it would appear, the common denominator of Virgil and the Moulin Rouge; and experts can detect their presence equally in Danton and Mussolini. There may be such things. But to disrespectful eyes it would appear that when Frenchmen want anything to which they have no right, they generally call it Latin. For it is sometimes useful to claim relationship even with poor relations, especially when they have a pedigree. Gaul, if the truth must be confessed, was a shade provincial; but

the Latin pedigree is noble and distinct, striding across the ages like a Roman road striding across the subject hills. Such an affiliation serves to align a hard-mouthed Consul of the First Republic with emperors and popes. There is room amongst its varied styles for trim Horatian odes and Ciceronian periods and the grave processes of Thomist logic ; and Rome breathes through it in prose, in verse, in bronze and marble, in law and government. Small wonder enterprising Frenchmen were quick to claim relationship. For a set of ancestors like that was plainly worth a good price at auction ; and the legend of a Latin culture, of a tradition that was somehow common to Italy and France, was good for prestige. Perhaps it was the truth. At any rate, it was extremely gratifying. Besides, it enabled one to confer patents of nobility on likely *protégés* by discovering that they were Latin too.

And that was how the great misnomer of Latin America came into being. For it was exquisitely tempting to extend a gracious hand towards a modest young sub-continent and call it Latin. What gesture could have been more charming on the part of an established, elder nation than this sudden avowal of kinship ? It was so winning and, without a touch of condescension, so good for trade ; and eager lecturers from the Sorbonne were a charming sight to see, as they deliberately crossed the broad thoroughfare of the Western Ocean to lift a courtly hat and greet a younger sister in the great family of Rome. But how much had Rome to say to the formation of South America ? How far was the strange edifice of South American affairs raised on the four-square foundation of Latin logic ? At any rate, there were few Frenchmen among its builders. (The long breakwater of Cherbourg recedes, and the hills of Normandy steal back into the dusk behind us.) Other republics owe their outline to the Republic One and Indivisible. But no student of the Revolution would ever recognise its handiwork in Argentina or the United States of Brazil. Besides, the main ingredients in the strange brew of South America

were fixed long before tri-colours ever fluttered or there were such things as republican ideals. For two centuries of younger sons had banged Castilian doors behind them, turned their broad, unsympathetic backs upon ancestral mansions, and drawn deeper breath under the bright skies of America. Spain poured her manliest elements across the Atlantic ; and it is undeniable, since nations cannot escape their ancestry, that the grandmother of South America is Spain.

How much had Rome to say to that ? There are few things in the world less Roman than the mind of Spain ; and that queer blend of Moor, Basque, Catalan, and Visigoth was the mixed crew of South America's *Mayflower*. Are we not headed, outward bound, past the big shoulder of Spain, past the green hills above Corunna, past all the little ports that the Conquistadores sailed from with the big lanterns bobbing on their poops and their Faith gleaming brightlier than their body-armour ? For it was Spain that sent them out ; Spain followed them to Santa Maria de Buenos Aires, and Portugal was still with them at Bahia de São Salvador de todos os Santos. What trace was there of Rome, of the great litany of Latin culture ? Rome's eagles ceased to flap above them long before Lisbon faded away into the haze, since Latin qualities are rare enough along the Tagus. If they had started from French ports or from the coast of Italy, one might have looked for something at their journey's end that could conceivably be Latin. But Rome is very distant from the Moorish alleys of the little ports of Spain and still farther from the broad estuaries of vast American rivers. Latin America, then, is a chimera. The tram-like rails of Latin logic do not run beneath the Equator. There is, of course, a vast inheritance from Europe ; but it is traceable to the true ancestors of South America—to Spain, to Portugal, and to the strange blend of races which fought, built, painted, and ennobled the Peninsula in the four centuries that separate the Cid from Boabdil. For as our ship creeps quietly across the

map until the voices of distracted European statesmen dwindle to a gnat-like buzz in the summer haze behind us, Europe still reaches after us with her last promontory. But the watchers on the point are anything but Latins, since Portugal and Spain still keep the gate that opens on the West.

BIG BROTHER

OF all the perils by which writers on travel are beset—anacondas, tidal waves, yellow fever, act of God, and the King's enemies—there is not the slightest doubt that adjectives are by far the worst. Not even excluding amateur photography. (And here let me observe that amateur photography runs a good second to any other scourge of humanity. I am not concerned for the moment with its capacity for converting any happy human gathering into a huddled and self-conscious group. But travellers should be warned in time against its magic aptitude for reducing any memorable scene into its own dismal shorthand. Under the camera the sudden splendour of an Algerian oasis—the shrill green of desert cultivation and the deep shade of little walks that wind among the trees—becomes a ragged palm against a bleary sky ; for Torquay and Beni Ounif de Figuig are all one to its undiscriminating eye. Show it a wave, a rock, a group of trees, and it will give you back trees, rock, and wave reduced by science to their lowest common denominator, neatly deprived of anything that made them memorable. That is why the destruction of his camera is the best accident that can happen to any traveller. For all his grand descriptions vanish, as we turn the page and come upon that dismal little illustration—the drab rectangle of contrasted greys indifferently labelled *Sunshine at Santos* or *Ethel preparing dinner*, which effectively destroys his finest dithyrambic prose. If he cannot trust his memory, let him by all means make notes *en route*. But his notes, whether made on backs of envelopes or little squares of celluloid, are quite unsuitable for publication. Let him remember that and spare us all the disillusion that resides in those masses of bleared vegetation seen across immense, uninteresting foregrounds. For no words on any

title-page can strike a deeper chill than the ominous expression *With fifty-seven illustrations from photographs by the author.*)

But the worst peril of them all is adjectival. Each continent, of course, lures writers to their doom with its own peculiar adjectives. Simple-minded travellers adrift in Gloucestershire founder upon "old-world"; all points east of the Balkans are "timeless"; and what clichés of desiccation haunt the empty spaces of Arabia, where the frequent passage of intrepid men begins to create a traffic problem for one another and lonely Bedouin demand a one-way desert. But even if the rocks of commonplace are avoided, there is danger on the open seas of adjectives. How many travellers return from the most fascinating scenes with nothing more to show than a meaningless assortment of epithets. One almost prefers the austere variety whose normal cargo is a sheet of cranial measurements, two meteorites, and a case of forbidding specimens consigned to the Museum of Practical Geology. For adjectives are a poor present to bring home. Seafaring men, who used to dazzle their sweethearts with a pair of monkeys and a parrot, brought home better evidence of what they had seen. Besides, they often had a pocketful of doubloons. But of what use to anyone is a pocketful of adjectives?

Flabby adjectival writing is the traveller's worst danger. It is so easy, as you lean over the ship's rail, to jot down the fact that palms are green, waves blue (until they break along the curving beaches), and the Pão de Assucar a vivid grey. But the statement means precisely nothing, until you have combined grey, blue, and green upon your canvas into the blinding panorama of Rio—and unaided adjectives will never do it. Adjectives, indeed, are the worst snare in South America. Brave men who penetrate the upper reaches of the Amazon see their best sentences die away, throttled in the strong, prehensile grasp of adjectival undergrowth; the Pampa remains largely undescribed, because a free use of the epithet "flat" fails, even in repeti-

tion, to render it ; and as for the Andes—who could ever hope to trace a line of peaks along the upper sky merely by murmuring at intervals that they were extremely high ?

Inadequate for any of its features, adjectives are no less misleading when applied to the sub-continent as a whole. For it eludes them with consummate agility. Light-hearted visitors who label it “ Spanish America ” stand by with rueful faces, as three-sevenths of its total area turn out to be Portuguese ; and the gay nondescript refutes with equal emphasis the grave misnomer of “ Latin America.” For, dubiously Latin, it is as doubtfully American—American, that is to say, in any sense in which the word is used in England. Frequent on British lips, that epithet relates to cigarettes, slang, business methods, rocking-chairs, and novels which originate exclusively in the United States. The American continent may run in magnificent disorder from Cape Horn to Baffin Bay. But by some limitation of the British intelligence the term “ American ” is always confined to things and people domiciled in the United States. Canada knows better ; and the South is at some pains to differentiate the *Norteamericano* (not to say *Yanqui*). But Englishmen will always know precisely what they mean, when they call anything—or anybody—American. And what they mean will be the gleam of Stars, the glow of Stripes, a mournful clangour of bells behind the cow-catchers of big, black locomotives, with mechanics who wear striped overalls with horn-rimmed spectacles and eat indifferent cigars, producers bawling at blondes beyond belief in Kleig-lit studios, the tap of Thompson sub-machine-guns, bond salesmen in derby hats confronting crossword-puzzles on the carved Renaissance thrones of hotel lobbies, clubmen mysteriously slain in tuxedos, the music of ten thousand tickers where Wall Street soars towards the lucid sky, and Manhattan whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle West. That is what Englishmen are thinking of when they call anything American ; and South America is anything but that.

Few things, indeed, could be more erroneous than to regard it as a southward extension of the America with which films and stock markets have made most Englishmen familiar. For Argentina is not a Spanish-speaking Illinois, nor Buenos Aires a brunette Chicago. We might have been forgiven for thinking so, if our reading was confined to the rare eloquence of speakers at Pan-American Congresses, where perorations swoop from pole to pole with one eye on the future of mankind and one, more watchful, on the State Department. But Pan-American ideals are no more immediate than Pan-Asiatic or Pan-European. (There is something touching in the way that politicians, after failing to unite a single country, take frequent refuge in the grandiose ambition to combine a continent.) Indeed, if the extent of territory covered is any guide, Pan-America will take precisely twice as long to realise as the United States of Europe. For that agreeable chimera contemplates a mere union of the Urals with the Pas de Calais—a trifling business in which our sole concern is with a single continent, “*l'affaire*” (as Napoleon remarked of Waterloo before the battle) “*d'un déjeuner*. ” But Pan-America’s sublime objective is a *Pax Americana* reigning from Cape Horn to Alaska—or rather, from Alaska to Cape Horn, since if there is any reigning to be done, it will occur north of the Rio Grande. A citizen of that Utopia could walk from Minneapolis to Valparaiso (leaping the Panama Canal) without a change of jurisdiction. But his walk (unlike the United European’s, as he strolled from Lille to Nijni Novgorod) would take him through two continents. That is the cruel truth that lies concealed behind the splendid name, America. For, masquerading as a single continent, it happens to be two ; and what is more, they are as different from one another as Europe and Asia.

More factors than geography and climate keep them apart. Race, economics, and religion have conspired to differentiate North from South America ; and not all the perorations in the world are ever likely to unite them. For what have

they in common beyond a name inherited by both continents from an explorer who discovered neither? Their moods are widely different; their ideals appear to run in opposite directions; and the looks that they exchange are rarely seen in lovers' eyes. For it can hardly be denied that South America views her northern neighbour with something bordering on apprehension sharing the ancient view that "all evill commeth from the North." It is not for a mere European to appraise the reality (or otherwise) of the menace; but it is not, one feels, for nothing that the "*Peligro Yanqui*" is a commonplace of South American publicists.

One rueful Northerner confesses that "the United States is known in Latin America chiefly by its movies, its jazz, and other aspects of its life which do not add to its prestige. Personal contacts are made chiefly by salesmen who frequently leave a bad impression as to our education and ideas." Can it be that South American misgivings are solely due to Harold Lloyd, the rhythm of the blues, and the defects of Babbitt as a conversationalist? I doubt it. For Europe is almost equally pervaded by obliging gentlemen with samples, by the disharmonic wails of dance music from Alabama, by the vast grimace of Hollywood; but there is nothing in the European mind comparable to the shrinking of South America from the "*Peligro Yanqui*." What is the reason? Such apprehension cannot, I think, have been inspired by jazz. Those tinny rhythms have no power to prevail against the lift and march of Argentina's tango or the dancing gaiety of the Brazilian maxixe; and South America is proudly conscious that her independence is not threatened from that quarter. Salesmanship never alarmed a nation, since a threat of commercial domination is just something to be dealt with by competition or tariffs. Besides, the mood of South America is scarcely one of mere apprehension, since it is occasionally tinged with resentment. Now one may dislike bad music or bad taste; one may feel a vague concern about aggressive foreign commerce; but

one does not resent them. The one thing in the world that universally inspires resentment is a claim, spoken or unspoken, of superiority ; and South America is acutely sensitive to such a claim on the part of the United States.

That is the root of all the trouble. For the United States, sublimely aware of their pre-eminence in the Western Hemisphere, have not hesitated to impart that information to neighbours who did not require it. In the first place, of course, the Anglo-Saxon attitude was to blame. What Anglo-Saxon can resist the certainty that he is raised above mankind by something that he cannot quite express ? (For your true Anglo-Saxon is nothing if not inarticulate : the vulgar business of expression may be left to lesser breeds.) Having attained this certainty, he is impelled by an exacting sense of truth to publish his results and make the world aware of his superiority. The world frequently dissents ; but since the Anglo-Saxon makes a point of knowing no languages except his own, its dissent is wasted on him. Indeed, he often takes the gnashing of its teeth for an admission of inferiority. One further (and delightful) feature marked the case of the United States : by a delicious irony the less Anglo-Saxon they became, the more they were convinced of their own superiority.

Such a conviction tends to irritate the neighbours ; and since Uncle Sam made no secret of it, the neighbours were duly irritated. Besides, his lamentable sense of superiority was fed from a second source. There is nothing in the world that puts a man above himself like seniority. The bare fact of priority in time renders club-members—to say nothing of relations—quite intolerable. That smoking-room, they seem to say, was theirs before the latest member of the club was born or thought of ; the waiters knew their preferences whilst a fellow-member was absorbing tapioca under feminine persuasion. Their gait proclaims it ; and no information is less welcome to its young recipients, since we all dislike to be reminded that we rank behind anyone. That certainty as well endangered Uncle Sam as a candidate

for popularity on the American continent. For he was palpably the oldest member. His entrance fee was paid when he joined the society of free nations (with some assistance from King George III) in distant days when royal Viceroy's corresponded in grave, official Spanish from New Granada to Tierra del Fuego. For nearly half a century his proud position was maintained as the one freeman in a continent of colonists ; and it was small wonder he looked down his independent nose at his more docile neighbours. Then the contagion of liberty took the whole continent. Dawn after dawn of freedom flamed in the southern sky ; there was a galaxy of Liberators ; Wars of Independence became things of annual occurrence ; and the United States, no longer isolated in their freedom, found themselves quite commonplace residents in a community of republics. The club was growing now ; new faces looked round magazines, and strange voices ordered light refreshments ; but it was a consolation to remind new members that there was someone in the smoking-room whose seniority was quite undoubted.

Something of that mood speaks in the proud cadences of the Monroe Doctrine. For President Monroe informed the European Powers that he owed it "to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety." Historians may debate the President's precise intentions ; and the practical utility of his pronouncement is distinctly questionable, since the new liberties of South America were threatened by the armed forces of Spain and France, and an ugly look from President Monroe in 1823 would not have kept many French or Spanish troopships out of the River Plate. In harsh reality Mr. Canning's cruisers were the shield behind which the young republics grew. But the deep echoes of the Monroe Doctrine reverberated gravely ; and its assumption of trusteeship served to show which way

the wind was blowing between Washington and Buenos Aires. For there was a touch of condescension in its implications. The United States had intervened in the debate between Spain and her colonies with a plain intimation that Europe would not be permitted to prevail because the United States were constituted in some mysterious way the guardian of free republics on the whole American continent. By whose appointment they filled this honourable post was slightly obscure, since there was no evidence that anyone had asked for their protection or that they could have given any. But what was plain was the resounding fact that President Monroe cast the United States for the commanding rôle of guardian ; and since guardians can hardly function without wards, his Doctrine contemplated that the pretty part of helpless infants would be played by the young republics of the South.

That is the misreading of the facts which South America can never pardon ; and there is something in its deliberate condescension which most nations would resent. The facts, indeed, entirely failed to justify it. For the War of Southern Independence moved to its appointed end. Europe did not prevail ; the beaten Spanish armies left behind them a galaxy of young republics ; the cheerful wards obtained their victory without assistance from their self-appointed guardian ; and President Monroe was not justified of his children, since they had obstinately refused to be children and proved themselves to be grown men. That was the answer to his claim ; and that, one might have thought, would have disposed of his Doctrine. But by some perversity of the New England mind it has survived to set the tone of international relations between the United States and South America with its eternal and disastrous assumption of superiority. The younger republics of the South grew steadily to fuller manhood ; but, bravely undeterred by all the facts, the solemn periods of the Monroe Doctrine continued to announce to a politely interested Europe that the shrinking form of Argentina, the infant footsteps of Brazil,

would be protected by the United States from its encroaching grasp. Since few Europeans in the wildest dementia of imperialism contemplate a conquest of Peru, the announcement was of slight importance to its recipients. But it was of growing interest to an exasperated audience in South America, where the news that Rio might sleep in peace among its mountains, watched over by West Point, somehow failed to command Brazilian gratitude. There were no cheers in Buenos Aires for the name of President Monroe. For as an instrument of international good-will his Doctrine committed the cardinal blunder of belittling those for whose benefit it was designed ; since there is nothing more annoying to grown men than a standing offer of a ride in a perambulator.

It was just that bland assumption of seniority which rendered the Monroe Doctrine increasingly distasteful to its beneficiaries in South America—of seniority and, if the truth must be confessed, of something more. If the United States have always been convinced that South American republics were not quite grown up, it was not altogether clear to the American intelligence that if they managed to grow up, the results would be wholly satisfactory. For the self-esteem of Washington, as it gazed south across the Rio Grande, was founded upon two convictions : that it was older than its Spanish neighbours, and that its own moral qualities were on a distinctly higher level. (The attitude is not unfamiliar in the case of elder brothers, since the Prodigal Son had one who suffered from the same delusion.) That hallucination seems to underlie the whole attitude of the United States to South America in all its manifestations ; and South America, which might have pardoned the *Yanqui* tendency to treat her as a child, cannot forgive the graver error which regards her as a backward, a distinctly naughty child. Yet North American acumen is constantly betrayed into that blunder. For when the Spanish-American makes his appearances in North American art or fiction, he enters with a bow, a sweeping cloak, a slightly excessive hat, a

flashing smile, a touch of perfume, and a wicked air—in fine, the “bad man” from Mexico. He may set hearts fluttering ; but he is ultimately foiled by a more unassuming blond. All the misgivings with which fair-haired races regard the sleek heads of their darker neighbours are heaped upon him ; and the most that any author will concede to him is that he has admirable manners. But however low he sweeps his hat, however gallantly his spurs may jingle, the audience retains its grave doubts as to his moral qualities. For he remains eternally the “bad man” from Mexico. Are there, one is inclined to ask, no “bad men” from Kansas City ? Is life in Chicago a tedious procession of civic virtue ? Are there no villains in Dubuque ? This dependence on foreign sources of supply for wickedness is surely morbid ; and, what is more, it has definitely warped the whole country’s view of South America. For the New Yorker, as he sits beneath his Tammany vine, regards the citizen of Buenos Aires as a helpless victim of unnameable corruption ; fresh from a political Convention, with the ballyhoo still ringing in his ears and a vivid memory of its deliberations punctuated by brass bands and the timely interventions of vaudeville stars, he views Southern politics indulgently as a mere comic opera.

That is the fundamental error of the United States about their Spanish-speaking neighbours. For they have failed to catch the high gravity of Spain, the solemn eloquence that loves to theorise interminably as *Don José* theorised in *Doña Emilia*’s drawing-room, where Joseph Conrad caught more of the mood of South American politics than is imprisoned in all the papers of all the research students that ever sailed from New England ports for South America. It was so tempting to regard the actors on that lively stage as merely voluble and picturesque. They were voluble, of course, because an animated language moves swiftlier than the *staccato* interchange of grunts which Anglo-Saxons mistake for conversation. And they were picturesque ; for who could fail to be upon a sunlit scene between those

mountains and that sea? But South America was not, was never wholly made up of colour and animation. Had it been, it would matter no more in the world than Haiti. The sub-continent has seen the slow effort of the Spaniard and the Portuguese at war with tropical disease, with Indians, with the vast mileage of those stupendous distances; villages grew into cities, and cities spread along their gleaming water-fronts; great rivers became highways, and men, like a family of ants, crept endlessly across the plains, the never-ending plains, until the mountains climbed slowly up the sky before them, and they braved the mountains and came down upon the steep slopes of the farther side and heard the waves along the Pacific beaches. That is the history of South America—no gay scenario of comic Presidents succeeding one another in a harmless rattle of revolutions, but the slow grinding of vast gates that open on a continent. It is so easy to miss its grave significance in the comic business of current politics—so easy and so flattering. For what experience can be more flattering to citizens of other countries than to look on indulgently while Costaguana persecutes her latest President? It helps them to forget their own defects in the contemplation of someone else's imperfections, to drown the shooting in their streets with Caribbean fusillades. It helps them, above all, to taste the deep security of greater age, to feel themselves a grave community of elder brothers, looking down with kind, indulgent eyes upon the antics of the nursery. That is the source of almost every error in the attitude of the United States towards South America; and error will persist until the Big Brother complex is resolved.

ANGLO-ARGENTINE

Enter the Prince attended.—SHAKESPEARE.

I

ALL day long they had been coming up the River Plate, that great yellow plain of waters which lies between the plains of Uruguay and the never-ending Pampa of the Argentine that ran five hundred miles clear to the west of them until it met the Andes. The dead level of the skyline was quite unbroken except at intervals by the rare interruption of a group of trees round some estancia. There had been nothing in the world for them to look at since they left the little hill of Montevideo behind them at breakfast-time. They were nearly three weeks out from England now ; but they were still at sea, although the land was near. Indeed, from what they saw of it they were inclined to think that they would continue to be at sea after they landed. For the level line of Argentina crept slowly past them below the long marine horizon, and the skyline was quite unbroken. It would remain unbroken until they came in sight of Buenos Aires after dark ; and having satisfied themselves that the Rio de la Plata, river of their fondest dreams, was quite as interesting as Lytham at low tide, they went below to pack. After dark a line of lights appeared, swung gently round them, and slid past the port-holes. The dark gentlemen who had been stamping passports in the lounge all day packed up their rubber stamps and, discarding their official airs of suspicion, became quite ordinary persons in soft felt hats on the point of returning to suburban homes. (I have always thought that the home lives of Customs officers and immigration clerks receive insufficient attention from novelists in search of piquant contrasts—the sharp eye that can detect cocaine through all integuments deceived by

the most unconvincing household frauds, the wizard before whom all names fly into block capitals failing miserably to change a postal order of his own, the Argus of the passports. . . .) Other dark gentlemen were coming on board, as the shore lights steadied themselves and came to a stand-still in the vague outline of a lit city, where the names of proprietary articles flashed on and off under the Southern Cross and bright parallelograms of light slid comfortably along tram-lines towards the outer suburbs. The newcomers were quite as interrogative as their predecessors ; but instead of banal enquiries about our parents' maiden names and distaste for anarchists they desired to be informed as to our private estimate of Mr. Bernard Shaw, the Five Year Plan, Protection, and other scourges of mankind. For we were to be arraigned before the press of Argentina. As there was little hope of getting off the boat until these peculiar cravings had been satisfied, the deponent grew unnaturally dogmatic, told Mr. Shaw (if he studies his South American press-cuttings with due attention) exactly where he might be expected to get off, gaily pronounced the doom of Russia's hopes, and (careless of the consequences) dotted Protection one. Then, after a discharge of flash-lights, the wanderers were allowed to land. That grinding sound beneath their feet was Argentina ; and, the long voyage ended, they were on foreign soil at last.

And it was foreign unmistakably, from the dark eyes in the *Douane* to the vague gleams of lamplight on the iron-work of *portes-cohères* that flashed past the carriage window with a hint of narrow streets in Paris. Foreign trams clanged slowly by to foreign destinations ; foreign couples aired themselves in foreign doorways ; and a hotel that would have been quite at home in Madrid spread hands of foreign welcome. We went to bed abroad ; and we were still abroad when we woke up and ordered coffee. Then, recalling with a sudden start some of the things that he had said to the reporters, our spokesman ordered all the morning papers ; for there is nothing in the world so filled

with apprehension as the awakening of someone who has been interviewed overnight. The papers came ; and at the first glance we were still abroad, since nearly all of them were foreign. There was a grand profusion of news items with a rich foreign flavour ; our startled photographs were sandwiched in between a shooting in the mountains and the eloquent pronouncement of a local statesman who led a party with an unfamiliar name ; and the news from England lurked in shy paragraphs where it was elbowed by the latest from Berlin and election prospects in Jugo-Slavia. For at this distance Europe was all one to a sub-editor. As we turned over the little heap of newspapers, we reflected with a thrill that we were six thousand miles from home in a city that talked Spanish and was not so far from the South Pole. Then one of them fell open at a page that looked unnaturally familiar. For the whole paper was in English ; there was a good deal about a Test Match and something that somebody had said in the House of Commons. It was, it positively was an English morning paper written by Englishmen for Englishmen to read in Buenos Aires (though it was evidently printed by someone who was more familiar with some other language). The royal arms adorned its heading. Even the local news was British to a fault, with intimations that the monthly medal was to be played for this afternoon at Hurlingham (of all places in the world to find below the Southern Cross), that its well-wishers had made a triumph of the Hospital Ball, and that the Scottish Ladies' Whist-drive had passed off amid universal satisfaction at a place called Banfield, a statement which received due confirmation in a photograph of several ladies who were Scottish beyond doubt. The correspondence columns were no less redolent of English hedgerows : for " Indignant " breathed his low lament, like nightingales in English woods, about the morning train-service from Temperley, and " Angry Listener " reviled the imperfection of the programmes. It was a sudden vision of England that would have brought tears to Mr. Baldwin's

eyes ; and you may find it any morning in your newspaper at Buenos Aires. What is more, there are two of them—two English dailies without a word of any foreign language (except the misprints) and an agreeable tendency to belabour one another in the grand manner of British journalism. They serve an English world that moves sedately up and down between the office and its garden in the outskirts, taking lunch at the English Club or (on Saturdays) at Harrods, where the southern skies look down upon a splendid replica of Brompton Road. Outlying readers unfold their copies a day late on the shaded porches of estancias under the mountains, and the listening Andes hear the latest from Lingfield. For Argentina is, perhaps, the one foreign country in the world where England has made herself thoroughly at home. That is the paradox of Buenos Aires.

II

But is it such a paradox ? There has been almost from the beginning an odd convergence of the two countries and their people. In the days when Argentina was a slightly restive Spanish colony and Napoleon dragged her mother-country limply in the wake of France, British eyes were turned towards the River Plate. For Spain went to war with England, and Spanish colonies became objects of interest to Whitehall. British ministers listened with polite attention to political exiles, who appeared in Downing Street with perfect manners, airs of mystery, and interminable plans of attack on distant territories of legendary wealth and inadequate defences. The British Empire had been very largely put together from the former colonies of such European states as were rash enough to go to war with England ; and if Spain chose to join the French, there was no reason why this agreeable process should not be repeated. So dapper gentlemen in uniform bent over remarkably misleading maps of South America. Sir Arthur Wellesley, just home from India and commanding a brigade

at Hastings, found himself advising ministers upon a project of attacking Mexico and was even offered the command (which he declined a trifle bleakly) of an extremely far-flung expedition, which was to start from India, capture the Philippines, pause in Australia to get its breath, and pounce across the whole length and breadth of the Pacific upon Mexico in time, if Providence was kind, to co-operate with a force launched at the same objective from Jamaica. An eager colonel was entrusted with the splendid duty of taking four battalions round Cape Horn to the conquest of Chile and, this trifle achieved, marching his men across the Andes. For geography, never a strong point with British ministers in time of war, was gaily disregarded; and in times of such magnificent dementia it was not surprising that a mere admiral succumbed to the prevailing mood. Sailors are always such romantics; and when Popham found himself in Table Bay with a few idle cruisers, what could be more natural than to plunge straight across the South Atlantic and conquer Argentina? The River Plate was barely two months' sail from Cape Town; the alluring project danced before his hopeful eyes; and when it struck the perspicacious admiral that he would need some troops, he borrowed an obliging colonel, nine hundred men, four guns, and six dragoons. (His cavalry may strike military pedants as a slightly inadequate provision for the conquest of a country consisting principally of trackless plains.) One winter afternoon in 1806 the sails of this armada came up the river; the Viceroy of the Rio de la Plata left suddenly for the interior; there was a scuffle outside the city; and the redcoats marched down the narrow streets of Buenos Aires. King George was solemnly proclaimed; a quantity of Spanish gold was shipped to England; and a judicious tariff conferred a preference on British goods in England's latest colony.

But Argentina's career as a British colony was brief. For in six weeks a local force had captured their incautious conquerors; and Colonel Beresford and his command were

the first British subjects to enjoy Argentine hospitality. (Two presentation clocks, indeed, attested their enjoyment.) A more elaborate attempt to capture Buenos Aires failed a few months later under General Whitelocke ; his regimental colours decorate a Buenos Aires church ; and the vast, inconsequent design of British colonies in South America subsided in the inglorious dust of courts martial and official reprimands. The gay admiral was duly reprimanded and the unhappy Whitelocke sternly cashiered. Not that a victory on their part would have been the slightest use to England, if they had won it. For the wheel of Spanish history went round once more ; Napoleon invaded Spain in the next year ; the Spaniards rose against the French and joined the Allies ; Wellington played out his long, decisive game in the Peninsula ; and when the firing died away, it was quite inconceivable that Great Britain could have retained any colonies appropriated from her Spanish ally. So even if Whitelocke and Beresford had won their battles in the streets of Buenos Aires, the city must eventually have been given up by England.

Yet the episode was not without results. For in the effort to expel the invaders the colonists learned to rely upon themselves ; and when a mood of independence swept them a few years later, that lesson was applied with gusto to the Spanish garrisons. The scattered fighting of the *Reconquista* was a school where Argentina trained for the decisive victories of General San Martin ; and I am half inclined to think that the dejected General Whitelocke has earned a statue in the Plaza Mayo. Besides, the country's attitude to England was sweetened by the campaigns of 1806 and 1807, since a sporting victory is a rare aid to self-respect. Few Englishmen resent it ; and the best way to foreign hearts is a defeat. Has England ever lost a war in Ireland ? Who won the campaign in South Africa ? Yet those British victories have left an aftermath of odium which compares unfavourably with Argentina's friendly mood. For Argentines reflect with a comfortable glow that the victory was

theirs and that, after all, the English paid their country the supreme compliment of invasion.

III

But that was not the last invasion. The association of Englishmen with Argentina was not ended when the sails of Whitelocke's troopships faded down the River Plate. Both countries were on the same side now, and they continued to converge. For their convergence was ordained by the blind forces of economics. In the first dawn of Argentine independence the farmers of the Pampa pleaded for the port of Buenos Aires to be opened to British commerce in their own interests ; and the author of their petition became the First Secretary of the young republic. Indeed, he died on board a British cruiser on a mission to England and was buried at sea in a British flag. There were a score of such personal convergences between the two countries. The early days of Argentina are full of them. An Irish seaman by the name of Brown made the first vestiges of an Argentine navy, and victory on land in the long War of Independence came from the sword of San Martín, who arrived on the revolutionary scene from London and had served under Beresford (no longer a reluctant guest of the obliging Argentines) in the Peninsula. Englishmen, perhaps, may claim to share a national hero who was promoted for gallantry at Albuera ; and other Argentines of the heroic age, like Alvear who fought at Talavera, bore Peninsular battle-honours.

But the convergence of the countries was more than a mere happy accident of a few personal careers, of spirited young Spanish officers who had served against the French alongside Lord Wellington's redcoats, or of eccentric Englishmen who found congenial distraction in a pleasant climate and someone else's war. For the two governments began to draw together across the troubled seas of foreign politics. It was not easy for the British statesmen who had fought for twenty years to banish revolution from Europe to recognise it in South America. But Wellington could face

a fact—even an unwelcome fact—when he saw one; and so early as 1820 he wrote of the Spaniards that “one would suppose that the reconquest of their colonies by force of arms would be out of the question even to them.” Such an admission from the sword-arm of Europe was in striking contrast with the more military temper of the French, who were prepared to play the exact opposite of the noble rôle performed by La Fayette in North America. For French warships waited in French ports to carry troops for the reconquest of the rash colonists. Canning was convinced that “France meditates and has all along meditated a direct interference in Spanish America”; Chateaubriand stated that French ships and treasure were available for the recovery of disobedient Spanish colonies; and Villèle assured the King of Spain that “if the Spanish Government wished to send an Infant to Mexico or Peru, or to any part of Spanish America, attended by troops, with a view to make an endeavour to renew the connection between those Colonies and Spain, the expedition now fitting out in the ports of France should be at the orders of the Spanish Government to convey the Infant and the troops wherever they pleased.” But in that very year Lord Castlereagh, no mean apostle of reaction, recognised the rebel flag of Argentina by an amendment of the Navigation Acts, and the Duke himself made an inadvertent contribution to the cause of freedom in South America by forcing Canning on the King as Foreign Secretary.

With Canning safe in office, the course was clear for a still closer convergence of Great Britain and the young republics. He had his difficulties, since Tory colleagues shared the Duke’s view that “considering what is passing in Ireland, and what all expect will happen in that country before long, the bad with hope, the good with apprehension and dread, we must take care not to give additional examples in these times of the encouragement of insurrection, and we must not be induced by clamour, by self-interested views; by stock-jobbing, or by faction, to give the sanction of our

approbation to what are called the governments of these insurgent provinces." But even the Duke admitted that "we must at last recognise all these governments"; his sole plea was that recognition might be deferred until events required it. The City was less patient, since the London merchants (of whom a forebear of my own was one) presented a petition in 1824 for the prompt recognition of Spanish-American independence; and a silent struggle inside the Cabinet was followed by the decision to send a British Consul-General to Buenos Aires with instructions to negotiate a Treaty of Commerce. This was recognition with a vengeance, and Mr. Canning was fairly entitled to his later boast that he "called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old." And that is why the name of *Jorge Canning* draws grateful cheers from any educated audience in Argentina.

IV

Their country duly enrolled in the society of nations, the Argentines were still exposed to invading Englishmen. For there was, as Hakluyt records, "a little locke of Lady Occasion flickering in the aire, by our handes to catch hold on, whereby we may by it once more (before all be utterly past, and for ever) discreetly and valiantly recover and enjoy, if not all our ancient & due appurtenances to this Imperiall Brittish monarchie, yet at the least some such notable portion thereof, as (al circumstancies duely and justly apperteining to peace & amitie with forrein princes being offred & used) this may become the most peaceable, most rich, most puissant, & most florishing monarchie of al els (this day) in christendome." But the invaders came less obtrusively than Beresford's perspiring redcoats. They came to sell; but they remained, if not to pray, at least to settle in the country. So early as 1831 there was a British population of 5,000 which has multiplied itself by seven or eight in the succeeding century. That is why English visitors to Buenos Aires enjoy the slightly breath-taking

experience of introduction to local residents with indubitably English names who cannot speak a word of English or, stranger still, pronounce it with the unmistakable intonation of the River Plate. For three generations in the Argentine are apt to leave their traces. Some families—all honour to them—have patiently preserved their Anglo-Saxon tone in the surrounding ocean of *Criollos*. Others, no less worthy of respect, have merged completely in the background of Argentina, and no trace of British origin survives except an unexpected surname and an intermittent throwback in the cast of a great-grandson's features. When the flood-gates of Ireland were flung open, a rich stream of emigration poured up the River Plate; and the *Porteño* Irish offer a delicious combination of Andalusia with County Cork. The name remains; but when someone at the door announces "Señor Patricio O'Flanagan," a Spanish gentleman appears.

But in its second phase the British invasion of Argentina brought more than new elements to the population. It was—it still remains—a nation of stockbreeders, where polished gentlemen in evening dress discuss the price of beef across the shaded lights of dinner-tables; and four-footed immigrants from England have made a great contribution to the prosperity of Argentina. The shire-horse and the Southdown sheep, the Shorthorn and the Hereford were all British subjects who became highly useful citizens; and in an Argentine Valhalla I am not sure that Suffolk Punch and Aberdeen Angus would not fill a loftier pedestal than any President. The country's debt to a long line of British *estancieros* is deep indeed; and year by year slow-spoken men from English cattle-shows travel out to judge competing monsters in the *Rural* at Buenos Aires, grandsons of emigrants from English fields munching comfortably somewhere south of the Equator.

A more formidable British invasion appeared in the early years of railway construction. Without a line of rails the vast distances of Argentina were condemned to poverty and isolation. The Pampa was a Sleeping Beauty, waiting in

her inaccessible retreat for an obliging prince to wake her ; and the magic wand was waved by the first grimy hand that pulled the starting-lever of a locomotive. It was a remarkable affair that puffed sedately out of Buenos Aires. The parent of the brood was a Crimean veteran which had tugged little trains of army stores from Balaklava to the British trenches ; early travellers in Argentina scrutinised their engine with suspicion and, if it was a notorious character, rushed into cookshops to lay in stores of light refreshments for the journey to the suburbs. From these humble origins the invading railways spread and spread, until their tracks veined the whole country like a leaf ; and that is why the visitor from home is reassured in some unfamiliar landscape seven thousand miles from Crewe by a railway signal that is a railway signal (and not one of those egregious discs with which foreigners are satisfied) making its Anglo-Saxon gesture to a locomotive of familiar build. For Argentina is the one foreign country in the world where England has made herself at home ; and all the Lincoln sheep look up, as the 9.28 goes past, bound to all appearances for King's Cross. That is the paradox of Buenos Aires, the reason why the first square that you cross after landing—the one with three railway-stations and a clock-tower that was a singularly tactless birthday present from Great Britain to the young Republic—is the Plaza Británica, and two English morning papers appear upon its bookstalls, and it acknowledges a sort of local royalty consisting of the Prince of Wales.

M A R C H A

WESTERN OCEAN

i. *Seascape*

THE scene was frankly urban. It was, to all appearances, a crowded evening in something Alley or someone's Rents. A hollow square of onlookers stood round and stared at what was going on with the steady concentration of house-holders interrupted in their evening shopping by a more than usually promising street-accident. It must have been a warmish evening, as none of them seemed to be wearing hats except a petty officer who was home, no doubt, on leave. And the event, whatever it might be, which had attracted them, was evidently of rare interest since eager heads clustered on dangerously congested balconies and protruded from windows. Whatever it might be, a large number of people, including a pair of chefs from a neighbouring restaurant, seemed to think that it was worth stopping to look at; and they looked with the unconcealed attention of persons who have money on it. Perhaps they had; for there were moments when it was distinctly worth a modest bet. A pair of bell-boys crouched to leap at one another with the tigerish ferocity of which bell-boys are capable off duty. I seemed to recognise one of them vaguely and thrilled with all the loyalty one feels for members of one's private circle when seen stripped and panting, as the bell goes for the second round. Their boxing was correct but fierce, with the full savagery of amateurs who mean to get it over in three rounds instead of the professional languor that lasts fifteen and lives to fight another day. They lunged and feinted under the raw light of the electrics; and as a blow went home, the crowded alley roared approval. It must have been a questionable neighbourhood, since it

made no effort to conceal its partiality for a coloured pugilist, who took the stage with an endearing smile. The wall of faces on the upper balconies beamed back at him ; and he seemed to have a host of friends in every quarter of the ring-side. The packed quadrangle stared ; and if one's eye wandered above the piled spectators to the sky, there seemed to be more stars than usual. Somehow one does not expect to find a night of silver stars above a crowded alley in a town with a marked taste for boxing. But there it was ; the night sky was positively African ; and what is more, it seemed to move a little. It moved quite unmistakably ; the sky was positively slipping past us overhead with grave deliberation ; and sometimes it swayed a little. For we were watching boxing in mid-ocean, two thousand miles from home. That was why I sat and smoked in the next seat to a trim figure in the white that officers affect in the tropics, and began to wonder how I should propose my vote of thanks for the ship's boxing contest.

2. The Old Hands

You had not noticed them at Waterloo before the boat-train went. And even if you had, it may be doubted whether that inconspicuous grey suiting and the dowdy little dress by which it was accompanied would have held your attention for any length of time. True, the grey suit, which represented the last breath of European fashion as it expired in the best tailor's at Pernambuco, had something odd about the set of its lapels ; and the little dress—proud effort of a “little woman” at Woking, to whom its wearer had been introduced by a relation—was somehow lacking in dramatic effect. But you had other things to think about before the whistles went and the long train drew out for Southampton Docks. If the truth must be told, you felt yourself a rather interesting figure, as you stood that morning at the carriage window bravely balancing between the Old World and the New. Passers-by, you hoped, pointed respectfully and whispered that you would shortly be on the

Equator, while railway porters paused in the very act of loading a van for Ilfracombe to see a traveller bound for Brazil. For you were feeling a shade spectacular ; and it was little wonder that you had no attention to spare for the other couple, who had so scandalously neglected the spectacular aspects of their departure. They walked briskly up the platform carrying a good deal of their own luggage and installed themselves with as little ceremony as if they had been going down to Woking to see his married sister. They had no sense of the occasion ; and in their business-like demeanour they seemed to miss completely the high drama of a start for South America. Perhaps they had been there before.

Once on board the liner, they continued to be slightly irritating, though in a different way. For as you thrilled in the first exploration of those sounding corridors, they were offensively at home. Nothing, I suspect, is more exasperating to new-comers in Heaven than the bored demeanour of earlier arrivals staring listlessly into the crystal sea with their hands in their trouser pockets and a halo which they have barely troubled to put on straight. So it was something of a shock to find them comfortably seated in the smoking-room, when you stumbled into it quite unexpectedly. They looked entirely out of place among those polished and resplendent splendours ; but just as you prepared to pity them, they addressed the presiding deity by his Christian name and received a favourable reply. This was a trifle disconcerting, although for a day or so they dropped into that insignificance which seemed to be their native element. Her outfit was negligible and his flannels, if the truth must be confessed, were distinctly grubby ; though when the sun began to shine, it was a little irritating to find that he appeared to be endowed with an uncanny foreknowledge of all the shady corners on the upper deck. For every expedition in search of a fresh camping-ground ended in a humiliating discovery that they had got there first. His flannels were immovably installed, and a de-

pressing hat of hers, whose origins hovered uncertainly between Woking and Pernambuco, was partly visible behind the worst novel of the season. By all the rules such obviously minor characters should have drooped modestly in some secluded background, leaving the ship's life to be carried on by the principals. But they ignored their rôle disgracefully. Insisting upon playing lead, they took to themselves others of their kind whom they appeared to know already, and they made a little world that was always meeting by appointment in the bar or sleeping where we wished to sleep or playing games at the precise moments when we wished to play them. That, taking one thing with another, was where one saw them at their worst. Deck games revealed them, since they were always playing games that never seemed to end ; or if anybody else managed to appropriate the court for a few minutes, they stood waiting hungrily for them to finish and making no effort to conceal their scorn of other people's play. We disliked them more than ever ; and our dislike was not diminished when the hot weather came and their men sloped comfortably round in linen suits that seemed to fit them, whilst our own creaked just as stiffly as they had the day that we first tried them on a week before at the tropical outfitter's.

The days grew warmer ; and in some unpleasing way they seemed to fit into the picture better than we did ourselves. Even that dejected hat developed a strange relevance to the equatorial scene. We drooped a little in the heat ; and in this failure of our resistance the ship became almost wholly theirs. Their flannels and their frightful millinery were everywhere ; and as we drooped, they were galvanised into an unnatural activity. For the ship's sports were imminent ; and they were busy hounding total strangers to subscribe small sums of money for prizes which they proposed to win. Now we could see the reason for their offensive assiduity at deck games ; and when the fatal afternoon arrived, they swept the board. Grubby

or not, those flannels leapt about the court with rare agility ; their owners propelled every sort of missile with a cunning learnt on a score of voyages ; and their womenkind were Amazons in fact as well as in appearance. They were all out to win ; and, apart from a slight difficulty in beating one another, they won without much effort. Indeed, the prize-giving became a slightly ignoble share-out between their little world.

From now on their voyage was one protracted gala. For that was precisely what it was for them---their triennial round of gaiety, of social brilliance, of talk, of dancing, of games where they knew all the rules and competitions where they could win all the prizes. We tried not to mind, of course, although it was a little galling to live under the dominion of their never-ending talk to one another about the new Club and an eventful picnic in 1923. Not that their talk was always unrewarding, since they had a vein of up-country reminiscence which led respectful hearers into the very heart of provincial revolutions and portrayed vividly the defects of a social system under which, on returning from the office, one was apt to find two Federal field-guns in the garden and a rebel machine-gun section sweeping the corner of the road, as the bad times set in when all the ladies were consigned to the Club in hopes that neither side would shell it, while the men lumbered cheerfully back to the office in their dingy flannels lest England's business with the world should suffer interruption. Dimly, as the shadowy coast of a new continent approached, we began to suspect why they had been quite so determined in their enjoyment of the voyage, of their endless talks in the smoking-room, of the sports, of everything on board that we had tried to take for granted. For one steamy afternoon we lay beside a waterfront where the black porters crowded in the glare, and a perspiring stevedore was far too hot to blaspheme. It was not easy to imagine whom of our elegant company we should put ashore in such surroundings. But two familiar figures were going down the ladder—the well-cut linen suit and,

meekly following, that dismal hat, restored at last to the place where it belonged.

3. *Equatorial*

The wind came from nowhere, because there was nowhere for it to come from. That was the odd thing about it. For its point of departure, if it had one, was somewhere just ahead of us below the skyline ; but there was nothing there. That was quite undeniable. Had we not been engaged for days in proving that there was nothing there ? We had been driving steadily towards it in the hope, presumably, of finding something ; but it was something like a week since there had been anything at all for us to look at. There was still the sea, of course. That perfect colour would have drawn thousands to a beach to look at it ; but such colours are not visible from any coast. For they can only be distilled from deep-sea waters by the deep light of mid-ocean, where there is nothing to cast any shadow. The tone, if one must find a name for it, was blue ; but it was a blue that soared far beyond the reach of adjectives ; and it gleamed deepest where it was jewelled with the leaping diamonds from our cutwater, and our creamy wake lay gracefully across it like a Court lady's train. We moved across it, fixed centre of a moving circle, under the sky ; and that, if one must find a name for it, was blue as well. But the sky's blue was different from the sea's, since it was pure light—except, of course, when it put on all its jewels after dinner and swept overhead in black and silver. The still ship moved on between sea and sky, and the invisible wind blew steadily from nowhere.

Such winds have a peculiar power to irritate. I have known a wind that blew from nowhere in the heart of Africa and grew almost maddening after three days of its invisible presence, as the tall palms of the oasis dipped and bowed to one another and the sand borne upon its wings blurred the hard outline of the Atlas. The desert wind of the Sahara drives upon the nerves ; and the sea-wind of the

Equator has something of that irritant effect. For it is a little trying to be played upon so steadily by something quite invisible that comes from nowhere. There was indubitably nothing there. Indeed, to all appearances there would never be anything again in the vast emptiness of sea and sky. It was just an airy and disused store-room where one might store a continent, and it had somehow got forgotten. One had always read that the Equator was an imaginary line ; but one had never dreamt that it could be quite so imaginary as this. Yet from some unseen point in the blue in front of us the world began to curve towards another Pole and the vast paradox of the Southern Hemisphere commenced. That was another world, where travellers moved southwards to escape the heat or travelled north into the glare of tropical plantations. The ship moved slowly on ; and the uncomfortable wind of the Equator blew steadily along the shaded decks.

4. Brazilian Landfall

The landscape, the unvarying landscape of mid-ocean changed suddenly, as a dark line appeared ahead, came slowly nearer, filled the whole horizon, turned from darkness to a deep shade of green, and stood revealed in the broad equatorial glare as an interminable line of palms. That was Brazil. We stared and stared, distinguishing a range of hills and something that looked like a building. We were across the ocean now ; and here was South America. For it was here indeed, sedately seated in the stern-sheets of the pilot's launch that bobbed wildly over waves infested (as we learned respectfully) with shark. And presently it climbed on board, smoking a strong cigar and wearing a white uniform. The Pernambuco pilot is a perfect lesson in tropical deportment, with his linen suit, sun-helmet, and the long cheroot tilted at the precise angle which we have learned to expect of dwellers in far places. Middle-aged magazine-readers felt comfortably assured at sight of him that Captain Kettle could not be far off. There was, indeed,

no reason why he should be ; for the ingredients of his familiar scene were all present and correct that afternoon at Pernambuco. The shallow waters of a dangerous coast foamed round us, as we swept inshore in a slow curve ; the palms were taller now ; and all the buildings on the shore stood square and white in the untempered glare of a Brazilian afternoon. The green coast was reaching out for us ; and we could make out among the palms of a long promontory, that was the very tip of South America, the familiar gesture of church towers. That was Olinda, where the Dutchmen built their churches, as they smoked away the endless afternoons and dreamed of Amsterdam and wondered how Van Tromp was getting on against the English and tramped back to duty in the little fort across the swamp which guarded Pernambuco from the Portuguese. But the Portuguese returned ; and here was Pernambuco with the green flag of Brazil limply displayed at every mast-head.

It was an afternoon of sullen heat. A storm was brewing somewhere below the skyline ; and the Equator, which was not far off, seemed to come suddenly nearer as we stepped ashore. Down on the quay the air was very still after the moving breezes of mid-ocean ; and the quayside population seemed almost wholly African. For Africa in every shade from a deep mauve to olive-green looked on with ivory eyes beneath innumerable boaters, as we made our first landing in South America. This was a shade bewildering. The city fathers, who rather liked to term the place "the Venice of Brazil," fostered a *plage* entitled Bôa Vista, and adorned the street-plan of Pernambuco with a thoroughfare named Rua do Bom Jesus, had done little to prepare us for this African encounter. We should have been forewarned, of course, by the pilot's equatorial uniform. Besides, one is apt to meet dark faces in ports that ship orchids and molasses. Someone was selling snake-skins, as we strolled towards the town, where the trams clanked down shaded streets with an armed policeman standing beside every driver. That very afternoon, it seemed, the transport-workers had gone back to

work ; and it was felt that a revolver at the steering-wheel would prove encouraging to late-comers. This heartening whiff of Captain Kettle contrasted oddly with an elaborate pantomime of traffic-control on the best European models ; and Europe breathed again in sudden vistas of rococo churches along the endless waterfronts of Pernambuco's meres.

But the place was most itself, I think, on the long causeway through the swamp outside the town. We drove along one morning in an uncertain automobile propelled by our still more uncertain grasp of Portuguese and haunted by a fear that it would break down somewhere along that stretch of sunny road, leaving us marooned, like poor Ben Gunn, in the still sunshine while the ship went on without us. If one must be marooned, few places would be more appropriate than a banana swamp four miles from Pernambuco, with a Dutch colonial fort comfortably mouldering in the sunshine and abundant promise of tarantulas. Somewhere ahead of us the little hill of Olinda pointed its church towers at the sky, and the swamp buzzed happily all round. Strange quarters, one reflected, for a troop of Rembrandt's Dutchmen. Yet their drums had sounded down the road, as they mounted the night watch and waited for the news from home in the broad shadow of their hats. Their little churches still stand on the point, though the Pope has them now ; and as the ships come in from Europe, the towers of Olinda watch the gateway of Brazil.

5. *Mad Metropolis*

The whole thing was wildly improbable. Looking back, I am inclined to think it never happened ; and in justice to myself it should be plainly stated that even at the time I had my doubts. For anyone might be excused for doubting Rio. Its air is heavy with unreality ; and cautious travellers, habituated to landscapes couched in a more normal idiom, justifiably refuse to believe a word of it. The mountains alone, a palpable invention of some demented

stage designer, would not convince a child ; and at any moment visitors expect to walk clean through the whole extravagant device and come out on the other side to find a disillusioned stage-hand working the lights. So much, one is inclined to say, for Rio.

But the amazing thing about the place is that nobody has ever found it out. The shameless creature still persists in staying where it is and repeating its incredible tissue of visual fabrications to each new arrival. Incoming steamers steal quietly upon it at dawn ; and the grey water slides by noiselessly, as they pick their way between unlikely islands with bulbous silhouettes. These may be properly dismissed as the last fancies of the night ; and nothing is more disconcerting than to find them still in the same place by daylight. But as the ships come in at dawn, the islands slide away into the darkness like humped monsters of the night. The steamer feels its quiet way towards the land, and eyes strain through the night for a first glimpse of Rio. But there was nothing there to see. The night sky was still full of clouds. Clouds masked the dawn ; great masses of them lay all round ; and long lines of fantastic clouds marched off into the distance. Range after range of them, piled and incredible, prepared to take the sunrise ; and as the east began to pale, Rio prepared its first surprise. For the heaped dementia of morning clouds, which should have melted in the first light of dawn, failed to dissolve. The startled watchers on the deck saw the light change ; but as it changed, the wilderness of tumbled clouds became a wild country of disordered mountains—of carved and tilted mountains heaped in mad profusion and leaning in all directions. Some round, some square, some conical, but all frankly insane in their design, the mountains come crowding to the sea ; and one, the maddest of them all, stands at the water's edge to watch the ships go by. After that humped hallucination anything, you feel, is possible. Small wonder that enquiring souls ascend it seated in a little tram that crawls along the sky suspended from a piece of string. For

the mad outline of the Sugarloaf stands at the gate of Rio like Phil May's lunatic, inviting visitors to come inside.

And once inside, you are soon past surprise. The hand of Nature (powerfully aided by the hand of man) stuns new arrivals into a sort of happy dream where anything may happen. Suburban streets end suddenly against the grey flank of a lonely mountain that has somehow got forgotten in a residential neighbourhood ; roads climb out of a shopping district into the dripping silence of a forest in the tropics, where the big lianas hang and unimagined flowers blaze in the shadow of the trees, and drivers of on-coming traffic are apt to be slightly bewildered by enormous blue butterflies flapping slowly towards them ; and a road-tunnel full of trams opens incredibly upon the sudden blue of unexpected bays that curve between a line of big Atlantic rollers and a tall plantation, where the palms are full of enthusiasts watching Association football. In such surroundings it should plainly cause no surprise to drive straight up a mountain (taking train for the last vertical ascent) and to emerge into the sunshine of the summit in full view of all the kingdoms of the earth. Speaking for myself, I have little taste for these vertiginous exploits ; but if vertigo is ever worth enduring, sufferers are richly rewarded at the top of Corcovado. The ruled streets of Rio, the curving beaches, and the wild tumult of the mountains are all spread before them in clear Brazilian light. Rectangular town-planning offers few attractions to the eye, though it is fascinating to observe the ingenuity that has contrived to fit a tiny grid-iron of streets into every interstice between the mountains. But the blue bays edged with a white line of breakers and the mounting madness of the hills that march away into Brazil are a splendour to the eye, as the morning sunshine looks down quietly upon grey mountain-sides, the vivid green of tropical tree-tops, and the blue ocean.

Such, in barest outline, is the background of Rio ; and what city could fail to give a rare performance on such a

stage? Tremendous avenues of palms stalk through its streets, like one of Mr. Gladstone's perorations, to a not far-distant goal; a vast hotel looks comfortably out to sea across a road where happy citizens in bathing-suits thread in and out among the traffic *en route* for the Copacabana surf. I retain an unusual tenderness for that hotel, since it came upon me after a fortnight at sea, and its soft-footed service of a joyously protracted lunch lives in a grateful memory. What wine so cool, what cigars half so long, what cocktails so reviving to a drooping spirit as those absorbed upon its terrace in full view of the crowding bathers on the beach in front and a big liner nosing cautiously round the Sugarloaf into Rio harbour? Political exile from other states in South America must be considerably alleviated by a sojourn at Copacabana. One exile, at any rate, from a neighbouring republic appeared to find it so, as he hung enviably absorbed, head down and elbows working happily, above his salad. And one could find it in one's heart to pity politicians in Brazil, because when they go into exile, it cannot be to that incomparable hotel at Copacabana.

Generously refreshed and with that happy consciousness that the entrance-hall was slightly larger than it had appeared on our arrival, which indicates that one has lunched, we left the hospitable building. Some functionary summoned a car, his efforts supplemented by our large, imperial gestures; and we prepared to face the massed surprises of Rio once again. Our nerves were nicely toned to resist shocks. It was becoming usual with us to switchback on a coastwise road between the deep Atlantic blue and the green of jungles, where the waterfalls dripped endlessly between trees that towered out of sight. Bronze negresses arrayed in every colour of the spectrum were commonplace wayfarers now. Nothing was more obvious than that stray hawkers should hail taxis on quiet country roads with a view to selling monkeys to their fares. And when our automobile in a post-prandial mood that answered to our own proceeded to invade a public park and frisk along its

curving footpaths, scattering the Sunday nursemaids in a gay charge, we had scarcely a scream left. For we were past surprises now; and it seemed only fitting that unlikely quadrupeds with pink, transparent ears should hop ungracefully out of our way, whilst our career was watched suspiciously from an adjacent building by something that appeared to be a coloured fire-brigade escaped from some forgotten comic film. Were we not in Rio, where anything might happen?

This stunned and happy temper, when the mind refuses to be shocked by anything, is the mood induced by the first impact of the city. For there is no reason in the world why any portent which the mind can frame (as well as several of which it had not previously known itself to be capable) should not appear on that stupendous scene. A dinosaur might shuffle through the deep greenery of Tijuca and cause no surprise; a flight of pterodactyls circling the Sugarloaf would be quite in place. The silence of a mere beside the road may be broken at any moment by a rising alligator; and alligators might diversify the rich façade of any Rio building without attracting much attention on those crowded pediments. For architecture has been nicely sensitive to the prevailing oddity; and the Brazilian fancy plays with the solemn problems of construction like a kitten with a ball of wool. Kittenish, indeed, the slogan which it brandishes in letters ten feet high at departing steamers, where a lonely skyscraper reprovingly remarks like some arch New England aunt, "*A Noite.*"

The lettering blurs slowly, as the ship moves away; and the repulsive skyscraper fades mercifully into the shifting background. As the city drops back into the distance, the mad profusion of its mountains riots along the sky once more. The bulbous islands in the bay slide into place and drop ungraceful curtseys, as the ship begins to lift a little to the swell. But the sea seems a more stable element than those insanely tilted mountains; and one, the maddest of them all, stands at the water's edge to wave its lunatic

perspective in a last, irresistible appeal to come back to Rio.

6. *Shark*

As sport, it sounded rather formidable. There was a good deal of talk to awe-struck listeners of which the upshot, if I remember rightly, was that on some previous occasion the ship's carpenter had lost a leg simply because the catch had been imperfectly controlled after it came on board. That was the secret of success. Anyone, it seemed, could land a shark ; but its proper treatment after landing called for expert assistance and advice, and neglect of these elementary precautions was apt to be followed by serious consequences. As we should be on the fishing-ground at Bahia a little after ten, we dined with high resolve ; the health of the ship's carpenter's remaining leg was drunk with some emotion ; and after dinner the fishermen withdrew to dress for their exertions, emerging in a costume vaguely reminiscent of a poacher with marine proclivities. Thus arrayed, they journeyed to the chosen scene of their exploits on the ship's uttermost extremity, where cooks come up to breathe and stewards gossip in the shade of iron stanchions and emigrants stare glassily at nothing, while their unnumbered offspring crawl perilously round the notice which invites approaching shipping (in three languages) to be careful of our propellers.

The night was still ; across the water the heaped lights, piled on one another at unusual levels, indicated the strange silhouette of Bahia ; and a few spectators—relatives, no doubt, of the ship's carpenter—watched curiously, as the intrepid fishermen spread out their tackle. It was distinctly unconventional. A length of chain, *item* a hook that would have formed a serviceable addition to the equipment of St. George, *item* one large piece of pork certified by the cook to be unfit for human consumption but, by the same token, powerfully attractive to sharks. These, with a mile or so of rope, completed the shark-fisher's outfit ; and, with a

muttered prayer, they got to work. The pork was fitted to the hook, the hook connected with the chain, and the whole sublime contraption, after swinging vigorously round the deck to the imminent peril of several impassive emigrants, was committed to the deep. The emigrants stared darkly, shocked by the wanton waste of foodstuffs and more convinced than ever of the insanity of Englishmen. The Englishmen stared too, and the pork bobbed alluringly on the still water in the starlight. There was a long interval, while we remembered hard the proper way to deal with sharks on deck ; and nothing happened.

Our bait, rendered no more attractive by its bathe, was cast once more ; and once more nothing happened. Eager helpers fetched refreshments for the fishermen exhausted by their labours ; and, invigorated by these reinforcements, they essayed a tremendous cast. The sodden pork swished dizzily round their heads and went sailing through the night. It took the water with a distant splash ; and we crouched attentively to listen for a rising shark. Somewhere in the darkness the engine of a motor-boat stopped suddenly. For its propeller and our chain had met in one inextricable embrace. We had a bite at last ; and we had caught a launch containing sixteen coloured gentlemen. (That would be two for each of us, if we could get them stuffed and mounted.) Quite undeterred, the shark-fishers sat on at their heroic vigil, remembering the proper management of sharks on crowded decks. That was the secret of success. . . .

7. *Paulista*

The road hung dizzily above the plain, and the plain ended in the sea. Two thousand feet below, the curving reaches of the Santos river wound through the haze towards the coast ; and the whole plain was heavy with the melancholy fragrance of burning coffee—of half a crop of the best coffee in Brazil burning in the spring sunshine to keep up the price to coffee-drinkers five thousand miles away. But

the air was almost chilly at that angle of the mountain road two thousand feet and more above the plain. A wisp of cloud hung round the little inn, as we climbed back into the cars to drop down the mountainside to Santos. Then the cars started, and we dropped. No one, I think, since Lucifer has ever dropped so suddenly. The little inn shot upwards to the sky like an express elevator in a New York skyscraper, as we plunged down towards the plain. The racing tree-tops leapt at us and ranged themselves in an impressive frieze along the upper edges of the scene to watch our terrifying progress, and the road flicked endless lengths of grey beneath our leaping wheels. A wind went roaring past. Narrowing our streaming eyes against it, we could see tiny strings of motor-lorries coming slowly up the lower angles of the road with heavy loads for São Paulo. But we had not much attention to spare for other traffic, as we went swooping down that incomparable road towards the plain, holding firmly on to anything in reach. Several of the company prayed for the first time in years ; for those far-sighted engineers, pained at the thought that anything might possibly delay our downward progress, had banked the corners like a racing track ; and the two cars shot round each angle of the long descent in a skid that would develop unsuspected powers of prayer in a motor-bandit. Our drivers crouched above their steering-wheels like dervishes at their devotions ; and we remembered suddenly, as the steep countryside shot upwards past us, that we must be getting near the climbing lorries with their heavy loads bound for São Paulo. That was an uncomfortable thought, with a sheer Brazilian cliff on one side and a vertical descent into an admirable landscape on the other. But there was not much time to think ; and even if we thought, it would not do much good. So we shut our streaming eyes and held on tight and hoped that, if anything occurred, the local press would print our names with some approach to accuracy. (That is, I think, the worst penalty incurred by British subjects who involve themselves in avoidable fatalities

abroad ; for no fate is more undignified than to be ushered into the Hereafter as a misprint.) Somewhere along that wild descent a streak of lorries passed us. A few more skids tore at our vitals ; the trees came slowly to a reasonable level ; and we were comfortably navigating the uneventful plain, where the Santos river winds through the scent of burning coffee to the sea. We wiped our eyes and counted one another and felt exceedingly unwell, since it is far from wholesome to drop two thousand five hundred feet in something under ten minutes. Even the Valkyrie must have had their weaker moments, when they wished that they had chosen some more sedentary occupation.

8. *River Plate*

The rain fell steadily outside the Yacht Club. But that did not make much difference, as the Yacht Club was surrounded by water on three sides already. So we lunched happily inside and watched the deluge streaming down the glass, as the rain drove in steadily from the River Plate and swept on to blur the outlines of the liners in the North Basin. The talk was more vociferous than usual ; for something was impending, and (like most events in new countries) it was to be quite without precedent. Besides, the great event, if it materialised, would be peculiarly the Yacht Club's. So we talked louder than ever, as lunch circulated in that happy glass-house and the water-front of Buenos Aires melted into the driving rain.

A little after four, as lunch was dying down, a sense of imminent events began to creep abroad ; and the company was torn by doubts as to the best place to see them from. There were two schools of thought—the Viking, which believed that they would happen in the rain outside and struggled bravely out of the big windows on to the terrace, and the Capuan, who were more numerous by far and, preferring to remain indoors, climbed all over lunch-tables to command a view of the dining-room. As it turned out, both parties were correct. For the high drama of the after-

noon was in two acts. The first began when a blurred line of shipping came slowly through the rain towards us. It was not altogether easy for the inexpert to detect which precisely was the heroic sailing-ship that had sailed all the way from Europe. But there could be little doubt about the tug whose dripping awning sheltered a brass band that was pounding bravely through every single verse of the Argentine national anthem (and the composer has not stinted Argentina). The liners in the Basin roared a greeting through the rain ; the streaming instrumentalists plied answering trombones ; and as they passed, we all waved jubilant umbrellas to welcome *Ingrid* home to the Club after her stupendous voyage.

That was the first stage of the rejoicings. After that the scene was moved indoors, where the heroes of her crew were to be fittingly received ; and we stood expectantly on tables, whilst unhurried experts adjusted microphones and press photographers poured out magnesium and statesmen put on their pince-nez to read over their remarks for the last time. After several false starts, in which stray late-comers were in imminent peril of a more than civic welcome, the heroes came. They were deliciously embarrassed ; and the discomfort of those brave young men was not reduced by the necessity of holding large bouquets, as the magnesium exploded and their country's spokesmen read out considerable orations, in which a rich field of historical allusion was thoroughly exploited. As for the rest of us, we stood round precariously on tables or pushed one another off or indulged in general conversation, pausing to ejaculate "*Muy bien*" impressively at a particularly well-chosen historical allusion. When I left a little after six, a minister was comfortably launched upon the theme of naval construction. It was still raining hard ; and *Ingrid*, whose homecoming to "anker" (as Hakluyt puts it) "in the mighty river of Plate" had caused all the trouble, bobbed comfortably on the North Basin, indifferent to the celebrations.

TRANSANDINE

I

THEY had been travelling all night across an endless plain, where there was nothing to be seen except dim cattle and way-stations with unlikely names. It was not easy to believe in the real existence of a junction called Vicuña Mackenna ; and when their informant added that this wild amalgam of an extinct Liberal statesman with a local quadruped was named after a distinguished poet, they made no further effort to conceal their incredulity.

They had been travelling all night across the featureless immensity ; they had been travelling across it, for the matter of that, all the day before, ever since the International drew out of Buenos Aires, headed for Chile. As it puffed comfortably all day long, the endless vistas of the Pampa stretched away to meet the sky ; and all through the night they had slept in perfect confidence that there was nothing in the world for them to look at. Outside their shuttered windows, where the dust of the San Luis desert had congealed, it must be paling now. But there would be nothing there to see except more cattle and more dusty little stations in artistically disposed on that interminable plain. Still, there could be no harm in looking ; and as they looked, the unexpected happened. For the plain, the endless plain, was still the same ; but as they looked, it tilted suddenly towards the sky, and fifty miles away the Cordillera of the Andes took the morning sun.

II

You cannot keep your eyes away from it. It draws them irresistibly, wherever you may be. For there is nothing in the whole drama of landscape that can compare with it.

I have not seen the Himalaya stand up out of India ; but no European range climbs half so suddenly towards the sky, and the steep rise of the Rocky Mountains above Colorado and the Great Plains seems almost gradual by comparison with the piled and towering obstruction of the Andes, where they lie across the level road from Buenos Aires to the Pacific.

That tall perspective on the sky is the unchanging background of Mendoza ; and its fascination interrupts your shopping in the little town, where more firearms are exposed for sale than seems altogether healthy and street-hawkers tempt the passer-by with arms wreathed in revolver-belts like vendors of braces in more peaceable localities. The local traffic-problem must be gravely increased by the suicidal tendency of visitors to step into the road with faces turned immovably towards the mountains on the sky. For the mountain-wall that bars the road to Chile draws the eye irresistibly. There may be other things to look at ; but you cannot keep your eyes away from it.

Small wonder that it came, an uninvited guest, to the picnic that afternoon. The green terrace on the little hill that overlooked the plain was a perfect camping-ground. For inexhaustible supplies of all that renders open-air life in Argentina endurable—of hot roast lamb, of red wine, of dance-music—sprang from its miraculous soil ; and after lunch there seemed little more to do for persons disinclined to dance than to lie comfortably in the shade and look out across the vineyards. That plain was more than half Italian. Its neat villages, ranged vines, and the long lines of poplar belonged to Lombardy ; there was a liberal display of the Italian colours, where cheerful emigrants recalled some anniversary of the *Risorgimento* ; and one looked instinctively for a mild Apennine background or some perspective of the distant Alps. But the scene had a harsher ending. For there, beyond the poplars and the green carpet of trim vineyards, the Cordillera of the Andes stalked along the sky, two hundred miles from end to end.

One had read often of a wall of mountains ; but the spectacle is far less common than the phrase, since our domesticated mountain-ranges are a little apt to huddle together with a faint air of apology for any inconvenience that they may cause. A wall of mountains on the sky is a rare spectacle. Moreover, the approach to other mountains is gradual, and the main range lurks discreetly out of sight, screened by a line of modest foothills that need occasion no alarm. But that is not the Andine way ; for the whole mountain-barrier is exposed to view in one stupendous panorama. Two hundred miles from end to end, the mountains climb along the sky. The green carpet of the plain ends suddenly in a brown line of foothills, etched against the white behind them ; next, the snow mountains stand ranged in order from the great shoulder of Tupungato far to the south along the line of summits, where the Andes go marching northward to Peru ; and, behind all, the mounting walls of the great fortress climb towards the central keep of Aconcagua. For the Cordillera of the Andes is a gigantic exercise in military architecture. First, a line of outworks rising sharply from the plain ; then the brown redoubts of the foothills climbing steadily towards the main defences ; and, last of all, the freezing bastions on the sky that look down into Chile. The mountains wait in line, watched by respectful villages among the vineyards in the plain ; and as the great wall of the Andes stands there in the sunshine, you cannot turn your eyes away.

III

It might seem superfluous to dramatise the Andes ; for what human touch could possibly increase the impact of that tremendous spectacle ? A lonely tower would be merely laughable, and the customary device of a frail bridge spanning a dark chasm could add nothing to the drama of that silent wall of mountains. Yet a reckless artist has gripped the theme and, luck or genius assisting, subdued his mutinous material with an astonishing result.

The road beyond Mendoza drives straight at the mountains down the long perspective of a park. Then, lifting slightly, it climbs round a little height above a purgatorial and blasted landscape of dry rivers wandering in a brown wilderness of piled and tumbled rocks. The steep ascent ends suddenly in the fixed gesture of a monument that crowns the little hill. Most monuments in young republics are a trifle forced ; there is a lamentable tendency for females of gigantic size to perform allegorical acts with cornucopiae ; and, at first sight, this towering extravaganza in bronze seemed to be an exercise in the familiar manner. Surmounted by a soaring woman, who appeared to rise with some difficulty from a charge of cavalry, it rioted all round its pedestal with even more than the customary verve. For the gigantic female, uttering the silent yell of emotional statuary, flapped enormous wings, and exhibited the fragments of her chains in raised, triumphant hands, whilst her attendant cavalry galloped precariously underneath upon an eminence no larger than their horses' hoofs. Another second, the awed spectator feels, and they will all have gone over the edge together, leaving the pedestal completely empty. For if the truth must be confessed, the note on the top storey of that monument was distinctly forced. But the balance was redressed below, where a lonely horseman sat his horse with folded arms. There is no excess of drama here. A quiet figure in a long greatcoat, he sat quietly at gaze. The reins had fallen on his horse's neck ; and it walked slowly forward, leaving a little troop of cavalry halted behind the General. That was how San Martín marched five thousand men across the Andes and freed Chile. He went out of Mendoza by the great pass of Uspallata, and his little column wound in and out among the peaks—those peaks that stand there in the sunshine, the still background of his monument. For the gigantic sculpture of the Andes is subdued to this immense design ; and, silent on his horse, San Martín stares eternally at the great mountains that he crossed.

IV

The road across the plain wanders with diffidence towards the Andes. For it would never do to make a frontal charge at that stupendous obstacle. Even the railway sidles almost furtively towards it, as though it hoped to escape observation by the dark forces that defend the lonely summits. In the plain behind, the afternoon sun looks down pleasantly on the last level miles of Argentina, as road and rail together creep round the shoulder of a ridge into the silence of the Cordillera. There is no sound except the grating of the wheels ; and when it stops, the little voice of the Mendoza river in its gorge drops to a whisper. On the sky tall mountains silently change places to watch the travellers go by. The light is failing ; and there is a hint of menace in the deep shadows at their base, where a pale strip of road winds through the gloom towards the summits. The folded hills look down ; the little road winds on ; the river whispers in its gorge ; a wheeling condor eyes the gorge ; and as the light dies off the peaks that guard the road to Chile, the dark forces wait.

ETCHINGS, FIRST STATE

I. *Visit of Courtesy*

TEN young men debouching from a tram need scarcely have caused quite so much excitement. Males must alight from trams in Buenos Aires without exciting comment. One might, perhaps, have understood it if they had been ten young ladies. But the sensation was undoubted, as the tram deposited them and went clanging off across the Plaza Mayo. Several policemen looked in their direction and fingered automatics; there was a rapid concentration of plain-clothes men on the terrace of Government House; and a sentry at the door in the impressive uniform with which Argentina preserves the memory of San Martín stood hurriedly to attention. For ten young men—there could not be the slightest doubt of it—were moving in a body upon Government House. This was a rash proceeding, since concentrations of male visitors were evidently unwelcome. There was no knowing what ten young men might not be up to. For one thing, several of them had their hands in their trousers pockets. Besides, the Provisional Government contained exactly ten members; and other changes of régime had opened with the casual arrival of ten individuals at Government House. So the gendarmerie sprang up on every side of them in an expectant sort of way, as they strolled innocently up to the big front-door.

To everyone's surprise they were admitted. The Government of Argentina received its latest visitors with its accustomed courtesy; and, disappointed of a *coup d'état*, the gendarmerie relapsed into a well-armed repose. The ritual on such occasions is carefully prescribed. A rapid transit through an ante-room, where weary citizens on benches stare enviously at the foreigners thus unfairly

privileged to be admitted to the presence without serving a protracted term in purgatory ; a brief interlude in the private secretary's room, where hats are piled in inextricable confusion and someone makes uneasy conversation to their temporary host ; a sudden bell ; the summons from within ; the tall, half-open door—

And on a sudden, lo ! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

For there is something Tennysonian about the spaciousness of ministerial rooms in Buenos Aires, those sublime apartments where ministers in cloth-topped boots sit beneath chandeliers beyond belief. At the far end of an immense perspective a tiny figure rises from its desk and makes welcoming gestures barely distinguishable across an intervening ocean of expensive carpet. After a grave ritual of presentations the company is seated in a circle waiting, apparently, for some sepulchral round-game to begin. One does, indeed. For Excellency flings a quick, Spanish question at the nearest player, who deflects it neatly to a neighbour. The game proceeds, until the question has been either answered or transferred, according to the rules, to a player who does not speak Spanish. Then the minister scores one and starts again.

Let it not be thought that guests are ungrateful for official courtesies. For their hosts were uniformly charming, and the game frequently deteriorated into friendly intercourse between rational individuals. But the really fascinating thing about it was that each minister seemed to appraise our visit according to his official station. Thus, Foreign Affairs, courtly figure, viewed his callers as a welcome act of policy ; Public Instruction found distinct traces of education ; but the Interior, official master of the Prefect of Police, detected instantly with departmental aptitude that one of us was missing. Our duty done, we tiptoed out again, drew hats from the wild raffle on the private secretary's table, passed the reproachful glances of

envious suppliants in the outer waiting-room, and moved proudly on to the next port of call. Finally, all salutations duly performed, we swept majestically down the big staircase into the sunshine of the Plaza Mayo, where a happy sentry stiffened to the salute. For if we were not a *coup d'état*, we were the next best thing.

2. *Pampers*

Over the city the sky turned black abruptly. Buildings, masts, and funnels were sharply outlined on a leaden ground ; and an unpleasant wind went roaring down the narrow streets. It swept every corner with the uncomfortable thoroughness of a machine-gun barrage ; and there were corners everywhere, since cities built on a rectangular ground-plan consist principally of corners. Then the rain arrived. It came as though it felt it would not be able to stay long and was determined to say as much as possible before it left. But it was soon apparent that it found our company so congenial that it had quite decided, abandoning all other engagements, to spend the day with us ; and all that afternoon it rained with a demented energy. The rain fell as though the air had turned to water ; it came from all directions ; as the wind drove it home, we began to understand why the Professor in *Sylvie and Bruno* had worn umbrellas round his boots as a precaution against horizontal rain. And even when it condescended to rain vertically, it rained in ways that we had never seen at home, since most of it appeared to come from underfoot. There were occasional defects in the paving of that southern city, and the rain made the most of them. Lakes appeared in fashionable streets ; the pavement outside expensive mansions in the best French style developed uncomfortable watersheds in systems of sub-Alpine complication ; and callers leaping out of cars were drenched from the knees down before they reached the front-door bell. Inside the house a charming hostess eyed her streaming visitors and, pointing to the window where a black sky was still pouring its tropical

deluge on Buenos Aires, made them feel quite at home by murmuring politely, "*Como Londres.*"

"Yes," they replied with perfect chivalry, "just like London."

3. *Conferencia*

The first plunge was terrifying, since the most hardened public speaker would feel a little hesitation before starting on a round of speeches in a foreign language. Royalty is always capable of these linguistic efforts; and as the embarrassed speaker clutched the little sheet containing his few remarks in Spanish, he was feeling just like royalty—like elderly, female royalty about to open a bazaar. Pronouncing with laborious inaccuracy, he reached the end and was distinctly gratified to read next day that a reporter recognised his speech as Spanish. It must have been a star reporter; and I cannot doubt that his unusual powers of detection were rewarded by immediate promotion. One of his audience informed the orator with reckless courtesy that his remarks were in the language of Cervantes; but if that was so, we have been much misled as to Cervantes.

Another circumstance heightened the terrors of his new departure. Public life in Argentina is conducted to a permanent accompaniment of flashlight photography, since newspaper readers expect a full pictorial record of the day's events. One gradually grew accustomed to the magnesium preliminaries of any gathering at which more than five persons were present; and I subsequently took the liberty of indicating to the British Chamber of Commerce that no effort should be spared in order to secure for British suppliers the highly valuable market in this commodity. But its effect on nervous orators is devastating. Habituated to the European practice under which a photograph is taken at the beginning of proceedings and the smoke dissolves long before the business opens, they are completely taken by surprise in Argentina. For a shrewd *criollo* public is not going to be taken in by one of those artfully staged photographs in which

the speaker and his chairman stand grinning sheepishly at one another. That may be good enough in the Old World ; but it will never do in Buenos Aires. A more virile race demands an actual record of the speaker in action, and a devoted Press sees that it gets one.

The process is a trifle drastic, since the orator is allowed to open in a delusive calm. His audience is silent ; it may even, he reflects complacently, be listening ; and things are going nicely. Then there is a blinding flash from somewhere close at hand ; a pillar of white smoke rolls silently towards the ceiling ; and when he tries to read the next word on his notes, his dazzled eyes refuse their office. This fascinating process is repeated at irregular intervals and without the slightest warning throughout his observations. As he draws obviously towards a close, the bombardment grows more intense. Photographers who have held back their fire until their subject's face assumes the requisite expression of nausea, hasten to discharge their instruments. There is a rapid-fire of flashlights ; synthetic lightnings play round the gathering ; and the chandeliers are veiled in acrid clouds as he resumes his seat.

Most speakers would, I feel, be disconcerted by this form of repartee on the part of their audiences ; and I may be forgiven for recalling one modest triumph over my tormentors. It was in the provinces, and a hospitable university received its guests in more than fitting state. The company was seated on thrones fit for cardinals in a long, panelled hall ; and our embarrassed spokesman groped as usual for the right Castilian word. The salvos of magnesium, he thought, were all discharged ; but as he ploughed comfortably through his theme, the dreaded outline of one last photographer appeared upon the outer circle of his vision. For the misguided man was positively crawling straight up the centre gangway towards the platform ; and as he crawled, he held the hateful apparatus of his trade a foot above his head. Trained in a sound Peninsular school, he was evidently holding back his fire until he could see

the whites of his adversary's eyes ; and the speaker on the platform watched his serpentine approach with dreadful fascination. Then, for the first time and the last, he took steps in self-defence. For as the distance shortened between the platform and his creeping enemy, the orator put on an unexpected burst of speed, telescoped his argument, and reached his peroration just in time to sit down leaving his enemy completely foiled without a flashlight photograph. That is the sole recorded triumph of a public speaker in Argentina.

But let it not be thought that orators have the slightest cause for complaint. Their path is smooth indeed in a community where the convention of public speaking insists that their remarks shall be recited from manuscript. How different the hypocrisy of Anglo-Saxons, which demands that we shall thrust an easy hand into a trouser pocket, glance casually at the ceiling, and pretend that all the phrases which we framed with care a week ago were improvised that very moment. But the Argentine convention is the exact opposite. Good manners, it is felt, call for due preparation ; and what better evidence of preparation than a bulky manuscript ? The spectacle of Mr. Balfour strolling in one afternoon to entertain an Oxford audience with a discourse upon æsthetics from a half-sheet of notepaper would have been profoundly shocking to an Argentine university. I have even seen a harassed official of a football club, whose tea was honoured by the President of the Republic, rise from the table with his manuscript in order to assure his Excellency that we were glad to have him with us this afternoon. So there is no excuse for the familiar agony of a protracted pause ; and, to do them justice, public speakers rarely pause in Argentina. Securely based upon their manuscript, they go from strength to strength ; and it may be said without disrespect that eloquence in Argentina is about the softest option that I know.

Nor is its reception ever lacking in the highest graces of Castilian courtesy. For I grew accustomed to seeing my

own modest readings described in print as a '*linda improvisacion.*' Castilian courtesy, indeed, was occasionally the cause of mild embarrassment to an expectant orator. If there is one thing that a speaker needs—especially if he is to speak to unfamiliar audiences in a strange language—it is precise instructions from the management. But his all too charming hosts were sometimes reluctant to issue orders to a guest or even to disclose the brutal fact that he was required to speak at all; and he recalls an anguished tour of one university, during which he was completely deaf to its history and blind to its visual attractions in a protracted effort to ascertain by direct question, casual reference, and the intervention of friendly strangers whether he was expected to give a lecture. Each question drew a deprecating smile; each sidelong reference to the absurdity of lectures opened another door upon some wholly irrelevant treasure of that university, until a final door swung open and the speaker found himself upon a platform facing his audience. After that, he never moved outside his bedroom without a manuscript. Folded and safe upon his hip, it gave him all the confidence that bootleggers derive from the comfortable bulge of an automatic. For he was armed against all emergencies; and at any moment of the day or night he could smile modestly and begin—“*Señoras, Señores, Permitidme deciros desde luego cuanto aprecio el privilegio de dirigiros la palabra esta tarde y agradecer lo mejor que puedo vuestra gentil presencia. . . .*”

4. *Rector Magnificus*

This is what really happened. After leaving my control the modest anecdote assumed imperial proportions; and in its final form the President of the Republic himself put in a sublime appearance. For half the Club chose to believe that one of us, when visiting that awful presence, caught an unwary boot against a round spittoon which rolled the whole length of a vast, official room, until it came to rest at the very foot which had been placed a year before upon

the bowed necks of the Opposition. But that was merely gossip—and until you have spent a month in Buenos Aires, you do not know what gossip is.

Here, therefore, is the meagre truth. Our business that day was not with the President or any minister of state. So no question of high policy arises. Not that our destination lacked anything of dignity, since we were to pay a formal call upon the University. Such confrontations are always slightly embarrassing, since our own universities are oddly impalpable affairs consisting of some Proctors, their bowler-hatted minions, and a Chest. If you doubt what I say, stop anyone in High Street, Oxford, ask him if he can direct you to the University, and observe the puzzled look that creeps into his eyes. But universities abroad are less elusive ; for they reside in stately buildings with distinct postal addresses. They have form and content ; and, being bodies, they have heads—charming and articulate heads, on one of which we were to pay a call that afternoon.

We found the building, rang the bell, and threaded the long corridors until we stood before the Rector. That was where it happened ; and the plain truth of it was this. The respectful deputation filed into his room ; and as it filed, their leader announced them by their names and colleges. This modest litany proceeded until the sudden interruption of a clang from somewhere on the floor, where an embarrassed boot had met a bronze utensil. The boot was hurriedly withdrawn ; but the bronze, though not designed for purposes of music, rang like a gong. Devout Burmese might have been excused for taking its rich reverberations for a summons to prayer ; heard at the seaside, it would have called whole boarding-houses home to tea. The Rector paused ; the leader of the deputation blushed ; then, recognising that the errant boot came (like his own) from Balliol, he swiftly introduced its guilty owner as a Cambridge man. What else was there to do ? That is what really happened : the rest is pure exaggeration.

5. The Exile

Nothing was further from his mind than to be taken as a text. All that he asked of life at sea was a ship's rail to lean on and a sufficiency of listeners. One at a time would satisfy him ; but some idiosyncrasy demanded that their listening should be done at a most inconvenient hour. For he did his talking after lunch, when most people swallow coffee and dive into deck-chairs in order to disprove the customary charges against coffee. I retain a vivid memory of blue equatorial waters alive with flying-fish and spangled with our spray, of the ship's rail before me and the sure haven of my chair a yard or so behind, of the slow, delicious onset of the afternoon unconsciousness held off relentlessly by his undeviating monologue. Not that his talk lacked interest. If it had, I should not recall him. For he was a walking sermon, of which I cannot altogether catch the precise import.

He was not much to look at. You may see him any day trotting along a City alley to his lunch ; he lunches at the same invariable table with three others wholly indistinguishable from himself (except that one of them wears glasses), and after lunch they move to an underground resort for the mixed consolations of coffee, oriental furniture, and dominoes. At night he catches the same train to somewhere down the line ; and every morning he nods briskly to the same unchanging circle in his regular compartment. Yet there he was, attached incongruously to a good cigar and going home to somewhere south of the Equator far beyond the reach of any Redhill train. That was the really startling thing about it all. If he had been merely going on a long journey for his firm, no one need have been surprised ; for Cockney sparrows fly far from Leadenhall Street. But he told us all that he was going home. He said it with a lingering gusto and described with particularity the things that would happen when he got there. He was looking forward to it quite as much as any traveller by the

Redhill line ; but his home was manifestly different from any home attainable from Cannon Street. For one thing, his lady did not speak much English ; but as his Portuguese was nearly perfect now, that did not make much difference. He thought that fellows who came out to jobs made a great mistake about the language. They only learned enough of it for business purposes ; and all the life they got was playing tennis with each other. That was a narrow sort of life, and what he said was that if you lived in a country, you might just as well live in it. So he had settled down there in a happy home, where he could get practically anything he wanted ; and he was thinking about taking out his papers. He was past military service, and it made a difference about owning real estate. He had quite a little bit of real estate. . . . I said he was a text, of which the proper application escapes me. But he is worth remembering next time you feel inclined to be severe with Englishmen abroad. It is absurd of them, of course, to keep themselves quite so uncompromisingly *to* themselves, to retain suburban snobberies in the shadow of towering mountain ranges, to exchange stale gossip out of last month's illustrated papers by the light of low, tropical moons, to play dull games with one another when there is a whole strange and delightful world all round them waiting for them to play in. But when they play there, they are apt to lose ; and if they lose, their country is a little apt to lose them too. For I cannot quite forget that fellow-traveller of mine, whose ample monologue was vastly enjoyable as he looked forward to his comfortable home somewhere below the Equator, a Cockney sparrow lost to England.

6. *The Missing Moustache*

This is a tale of mystery. No contemporary series is complete without one. But it is not the kind that connoisseurs discuss in solemn conclave once a month ; forensic medicine has little to say to it ; and it does not involve a novel point in toxicology. So perhaps it will appear old-

fashioned. For the deed, if I am not mistaken, was done with a blunt instrument.

They all met at the railway-station ; and as the night express steamed out, they were all present and correct. There were about a dozen of them, not counting the camp-followers. That expedition was developing an amazing aptitude for gathering up young, attractive females and carrying them round the country in its train. Nobody seemed to disapprove ; their parents positively came down to the station to see their daughters off ; and as those parents seemed to own the station as well as the daughters, who were we to complain ? But since no suspicion rests on any of the ladies, I will not trouble to describe them. For this is not one of those base, commercial mysteries where doubt is cunningly prolonged by the deliberate introduction of unnecessary characters, stray Chinamen, neurotic butlers, and young women with a morbid passion for avoidable arrest by unattractive sleuths. This is a plain tale of strange happenings in a moving train by night.

They were all present, as I said, and their business was to pay a visit to two universities up the line. As the train rumbled through the dark, they dined. They were still dining, as it rumbled a good many kilometres further north —for dining was their *forte*. After dinner they settled comfortably down to games of chance with highly complicated rules, playing with one another and with a few members of the great university in the city they had left behind, whose dark moustaches were conspicuous in that clean-shaven company of blonds. I recall one particularly, which was owned by a special friend of mine. His conversation was always pleasant, and it was reassuring to take him with us on our precarious pilgrimage. I retired rather early ; and as I left the parlour-car, he smiled his charming smile beneath the dark moustache. Some hours later, when their games were finished, the remainder of the company retired for the night. (Did I not say that this was a

tale of mystery? And do not all denizens of mysteries, disdaining the unimpressive act of going to bed, invariably 'retire for the night'?)

The morning came. The train was at a standstill in a thin morning mist, halted at the first of the two cities that we were to visit. A group approached us; and as it came nearer, I seemed to recognise a charming smile that I had seen before. But where was his moustache? I looked again. The face was there all right, with the smile duly centred in its accustomed place; but the upper lip that usually crowned it was as bare as the plucked brow of a film actress. It is a little disconcerting to lose moustaches in the night. I began to feel uneasy. And then I saw it in a flash: he had disguised himself. That must be it, of course. By some rare perfection of hospitable ingenuity the dark moustache which had received us so charmingly a week ago at Buenos Aires was now to be an entirely different person and receive us with clean-shaven grace as the University of Córdoba. To-morrow, doubtless, he would grow a beard and bow us into our third port of call in the character of a fraternal delegate from the University of Rosario. It was a scheme of blinding brilliance; and as a beard would rather suit him, I looked forward to to-morrow.

But the bright edifice collapsed. For he seemed slightly embarrassed when I addressed him by a new name and asked him questions about life at Córdoba. Indeed, he obstinately refused to be another person and denied completely that he proposed to spend the next night in intensive agriculture with a view to the production of a beard for Rosario. Preferring commonplace, he said the moving train had caused his razor to desert its office and remove one side of his moustache. That gone, the rest was plainly bound to follow. Would Miss D—y S—s ever have thought of that? But I call everyone to witness that my clues are all in order. I said it was a moving train and a blunt instrument.

7. Man of Letters

His name had formed part of my meagre equipment for the expedition, since I knew him already as a writer of distinction. Indeed, I sampled him one afternoon, as the ship glided on its way towards his native country ; and the results were highly stimulating. For he appeared to deal extensively in that impressive eloquence which is the glory of some kinds of Continental literature. His prose was, if I may term it so without disrespect, highly aerated. Its effect upon the reader was exhilarating, with a slight sensation of internal expansion. (You recall the story of the poor lady who read Victor Hugo for a week and suffered from the delusion that she could not pass through doors of ordinary size ?) Reading him was like standing on the fringe of a large open-air demonstration and listening to the cheers.

The next phase was a trifle awkward. Once in his country, I bravely exhibited my little fragments of local literary erudition ; but I was pained to notice that his name upon my lips was invariably received with chilly silence. This was disconcerting. Perhaps I had pronounced it wrong. So I tried other versions ; but though his name was different each time, the silence was the same. Then I made discreet enquiries, from which I ascertained that his political career had certain features which had somehow dimmed his popularity. That was odd, too, because they were just the features which in England would have ensured him the commanding status of a popular idol. I mean, the fact that in a crowded life he had managed to belong to most parties would have been quite a help to him at home. Take Mr. Churchill. Has he not passed across the scene disseminating loyalties and gathering a devoted public ? Or Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. For who can doubt that his recollections, when they appear in print, will find eager readers among the parties he has left behind as well as in the stately homes of England ? But foreigners are so logical ; and that changeful author's name uniformly failed to stir enthusiasm.

Quite undeterred, I called upon him. He was a charming person of great sagacity and (as his prose had led me to expect) unusual eloquence. For he addressed me at some length in terms appropriate to a large public gathering. As Mr. de Valera had once done the same, I knew the right way to behave and remained demurely seated, breaking at intervals into respectful cheers. But his discourse was far superior to anything of which Mr. de Valera was ever capable, even when the records of that melancholy gramophone were new. My host was brilliantly illuminating upon his country's history ; and it was only when he verged on current politics that his bias of the moment became unduly visible. For his intense loyalty to the government of the day impelled him to rise from his chair exclaiming with a raised forearm, "*Vive le Général.*" It echoed round the little room ; and as the echoes died away, one was quite irresistibly reminded of the first comparison suggested by his prose. It was all in the key of Victor Hugo—of a more judicious Hugo, who had chosen the other side and was not under the sad necessity of declaiming to awed visitors in the depressing exile of seaside lodgings at Guernsey.

8. *Asado*

*" ; Un pasito
Due pasito
Eco la ranchera ! . . . "*

A cheerful baritone sang the words manfully with a thick up-country accent, and the accompaniment swung gaily into the bouncing measure of a country dance. If there is any lilt on earth that is more companionable, it is unknown to me ; and the *ranchera* jiggled gaily on to the triumphant uproar of its final bar. But that was afterwards.

We were in the open air, of course, and the breeze that moved the leaves breathed with the quiet confidence of breezes that have the whole breadth of the Pampa to breathe in. Our hosts had promised us a treat. We were to have something that we could never hope to have outside the Argentine—a real *criollo* roast. Had we had one

before? They always asked us that; and, being wise, we always answered that we had not. Then they would give us one—a real *asado* of the old days—and they went off to issue comprehensive orders for meat, music, and red wine. We always asked for one; our hosts always acceded on the strict understanding that it was the first that we had ever had; and we were innocent of perjury, as they were never quite the same. That is the charm of an *asado*. Sometimes it was a lamb eaten in the deep silence of the Pampa with that contentment which comes after fifteen miles in the saddle at a slow gallop. Once the tall Andes looked over our shoulders as we were eating; and once we ate oxen roasted whole in the shade of great eucalyptus trees not far from the broad waters of the Paraná, and nothing was allowed to happen until a respected local resident had kissed all the ladies present because he always did and it was a point of honour with him that they should fly shrieking. The full total of our *asados* is beyond numbering; for they succeeded one another, each certified to be the very first that we had ever tasted; and what remains is a blurred happy memory of composite occasions, of gracious afternoons where smiling ladies gave us far too much to eat and poured wine into glasses far too big for wine, and in the background somebody was always singing.

Song is the overture and the accompaniment of an *asado*. Two figures casually seated under a tree launch suddenly into the stamping measure of a *zamba*; and as the deep chords twang, they sing an interminable song about a lovely lady and a good deal of money. For the lyric fancy of Argentina dwells happily upon *mujer* and *plata*; and the simple air winds in and out, as the hero of the song makes his fortune and achieves his *criolla linda*. You may sit and listen to it in the shade; or you may stroll a yard or so to watch the meat roasting on the ground, hoisted upon its irons and turned by a formidable figure with a tanned *gaucho* face. As you watch it, you feel very far from home. Perhaps it is the sight of the big knife at the smiling *gaucho*'s

belt, or the strange trees, or the tall llamas grazing quietly in the next field. The singers quicken suddenly, and the next song goes to the marching beat of a *chacarera*. The leader announces another verse with the long-drawn “*Segunda-a*”; and you know that home is far away. But a hospitable house is near. That is a comforting feature of alfresco meals in Argentina. The heroes of picnics in Europe take a perverse delight in long, uncomfortable journeys with bulky impedimenta, which land the party in remote localities where it is quite impossible to repair grave omissions in equipment. The missing knife, the lost cucumber, the forgotten salt—these are the commonplaces of picnics at home. But Argentina, with the caution born of great distances, prefers to lunch outside the house with everything near at hand; and an *asado* may sometimes be just a meal taken in the open air instead of in the dining-room.

But what a meal! The roast is ready now, and the big knife comes into play. Attendant cavaliers race for appropriate morsels for their ladies, since even ladies eat more out of doors. Then, the demands of chivalry once satisfied, they turn with terrifying gusto to their own requirements; and what the male requires when stimulated by fresh air, red wine, and music, only survivors can recall. Lifelong vegetarians have been detected racing one another for the kidney; and when lunch is over, there is nothing left but a few smouldering embers. But the music starts again. This time it is a bouncing country dance; and the big voice, invigorated by a hearty lunch, announces the *ranchera* with a thundering “*Aura*.” The cheerful air pounds gaily on, and the friendly baritone intones the chorus with an up-country accent:

“*Adelante
Co lu baile
Cuesto si qu'e creoyo
Ahora somo todo gauchos
Y nada mase . . . lo mecor.*”

CORTE

GAY CITY

ITS fame, as you may say, precedes it. For intending visitors to Buenos Aires know all about it long before they get there ; and if they do not, other people who have never been there are prepared to tell them all about it. I once passed a music-hall in Walthamstow which advertised a delirious entertainment called *The Follies of Buenos Aires* ; and that bright promise to the mournful denizens of Tottenham and the adjacent suburbs is typical of the position held by Buenos Aires in the affections of mankind. When Juan de Garay's landing-place was named El Puerto de Santa Maria de Buenos Aires, we cannot doubt that it was intended as a double tribute to religion and the climate, conveying (as the guide-book says in its incomparable prose) " a well-founded allusion to the salubrity of the situation." But that lovely name has somehow acquired a distinct flavour of naughtiness. Its reputation, by some odd chain of association, is rather for gaiety than tonic breezes ; and when intending visitors announce Buenos Aires as their destination, they will receive more knowing looks than congratulations on their choice of so bracing a resort. Historians have not determined precisely when the change occurred. But there is no evidence of undue anxiety among the female relatives of General Whitelocke, when he was ordered to the River Plate in 1807 ; and it is not recorded that the young Darwin was greeted with black looks at breakfast, when he announced that the *Beagle* would probably be making a short stay at Buenos Aires. So the change is probably of recent date. (The tango, it may be remarked, was unknown to the outer world before 1900.) But whenever it occurred, the fact is quite un-

doubted, and visitors to Buenos Aires land in high hopes or nervous anticipation, according to their points of view.

The incoming liner ploughs the yellow waters of the River Plate, and they strain their ears for the first throb of tango bands. But there is no music in the North Basin ; the waterfront of Buenos Aires looks very much like any other waterfront of a great port. Perhaps the buildings are more dignified ; but dignity was the last thing that they were looking for at Buenos Aires. A slight sense of injury invades them, as the tall façades slip by. Why, they wonder, should the fancy of Walthamstow be stirred by Buenos Aires Follies, if there is nothing there but dignified façades ? Any town, of course, is bound to have its public buildings. Law courts must sit somewhere, and Government departments require impressive premises to lose their letters in. But there can be few cities in the world which carry dignity in architecture to the impressive lengths of Buenos Aires. Almost any one of twenty monumental buildings might be the General Post Office ; potential Law Courts abound on every hand ; and the solemn frontage of the Opera might be the National Assembly, while by a natural compensation the Assembly looks very like a palace of the arts—an expensive palace of the more solemn arts. But you will search in vain for the lighter arts in Buenos Aires. That is the great disillusion.

When hopeful visitors in opera hats leave their hotels in search of entertainment, they find a most restricted choice. There is the Opera, of course, where they may be regaled on solid European fare exported in large packing-cases from Milan, Vienna, and Covent Garden. But there is nothing Argentine at the Colón except the chatter in the *foyer* ; and one had not come six thousand miles in order to enjoy an entertainment that could be taken just as well in Bow Street. For the rest, there may be a Spanish company, a revue shipped bodily from Montmartre (was not the *furore* of *Ba-ta-clan* so devastating that the *foyer* of the Opera was completely denuded of males and its deserted damsels

left complaining ?), or a French *comédienne*. But where, in all this galaxy of international talent, is Argentina ? That was the voice that we had come so far to hear ; and it was nowhere to be heard, unless we were prepared to unravel obscure political allusions in a few topical revues or listen for it on the mournful air of a depressing *cabaret*, where departing visitors were pressed to stay a little longer by a despairing management on the ground that something was really just about to happen. Could this be the Buenos Aires of our dreams, where life was a mad whirl of Follies and the tango throbbed from dawn till dusk ?

Yet Buenos Aires has a voice that you may catch, if you listen hard. Somewhere in a gallery above that dismal dancing-floor the violins of an incomparable band beat to a slow pulse of music ; a strange air creeps across the throbbing undertone of strings ; and above the music a deep voice utters its complaint. It is an education in the tango to have heard *Porqué* at Ta-ba-ris. Or a wilderness of dreary vaudeville is brightened by the sudden interruption of a marching air sung in a hoarse Spanish voice, a woman's voice that rises to a wailing minor or falls to a reproachful bass, as the air marches to its close. That is the voice of Buenos Aires ; and it is the world's misfortune that outside Buenos Aires it is rarely heard. For the tinkling insignificance by which most of us understand a tango would not live for five minutes in the city of its birth, where a frantic audience will hold up the entire programme as it cheers the latest tango with the full connoisseurship of a ring-side audience in Seville appraising a new *espada*. Almost all that Europe knows of it is in the languid mode that floated on the air of tango teas in distant days before the War, a hesitating air to which ladies in large feathered hats might sway becomingly with *beaux* in morning-coats. But the contemporary tango moves with a smarter step ; the sharp precision of its time cuts like a knife ; and, reared on this exact foundation, a haunting air marches unhesitatingly from the sudden drama of its opening bar to the defiance

of its close. That is the tango as it may be heard in Buenos Aires—sung, danced, or orchestrated—and it will suffice for the voice of a great city. Not that it is a conspicuously gay voice, as gaiety is understood in Western Europe; for it has all the minor melancholy of Spain set to a marching measure.

Gaiety in Buenos Aires is rather apt to crop out in unusual places. Few cities express their more exuberant modes in taxicabs. But nothing more sumptuous than a Buenos Aires taxi was ever dreamt of by a successful negro gambler. The length, the breadth, the speed, the cushions, the window-glass engraved with luscious spirals appropriate to a Chicago gunman's hearse compose a whole of unexampled sumptuousness; and a sardonic contrast propels these Juggernauts at speed (for Argentine automobilism is nothing if not spirited) down narrow alleys planned by Spanish forefathers to be traps for shade in the noonday heat, their silence quite unbroken except by the click of an occasional mule. This super-position of a modern city upon an old Colonial ground-plan has strange results. The square blocks of buildings, which Spanish settlements borrowed from the Roman camp, may be multiplied with ease into the rectangular grid-iron of streets that marks the very latest thing in American town-planning. But if the streets between the houses remain of the same width as was required for traffic when gentlemen in spurs came trotting into Buenos Aires, there will be difficulties. A brave attempt to ease the situation and broaden the roadway has been made by shaving off the pavements, with the sad consequence that local pedestrians lead a hunted life. For single file is a compulsory formation on the sidewalks of Buenos Aires; and even in single file foot-passengers are haunted by grave preoccupations, since the trams overlap the pavement by a foot or so, and there is every chance, each time you stop to gaze incautiously into a shop-window, that a tram thundering by within an inch of your coat-tails will scoop you off the pavement on its ample cow-catcher and bear you off into

the outer suburbs. That fear is always present to the stranger's mind ; it shadows him as he goes wearily down the interminable length of B. Mitre ; and the only freedom that he knows is at the happy hour when street-lamps shine out in triple clusters above Florida and that delightful street becomes (as it was meant to be) a *souk* left by the Moors in some old Spanish town for all the world to pace at ease between the little shops in the cool evening.

But, that relief apart, life in Buenos Aires seems always rather hunted. For when its visitors are not actually hunted by its traffic, they are pursued by its inexhaustible benevolence, by the alarming volume of their own engagements and the impossibility of being in three places at the same moment or even of getting to one of them in time. As I turn once again the blotted pages of an old engagement-book, the scenes come crowding back—Florida choked with evening traffic, the rain streaming down, the pavements gleaming, and the Jockey Club five blocks ahead, where a kind host is still expecting one to dine with him at half-past eight, although the time is now a little after half-past nine ; the scramble out of a lecture-hall in Tucuman, when an unmannerly lecturer hustled his own audience with rare courtesy because he had precisely seven minutes in which to get down to the station and catch a train for Hurlingham, if he was to be in time for dinner ; the spacious ease of a stroll in the *Zoológico*, where no traffic could pursue you down the little curving paths and you could watch the condors or go for penny rides on llamas ; innumerable rendezvous at Harrods (name of homely sound, but cooking of good foreign quality) ; the great mansions on the Avenida Alvear flashing past, as you drove out to dine in far Belgrano or went racing at Palermo on Sunday afternoons. That was, I think, the crown and zenith of all luxury in Argentina, where respectful servitors stood waiting at your elbow to collect your bets and, if you won, your winnings were delivered on a salver—no scramble in the Ring, no queue at a barred window, but your winnings gravely presented

on a salver at your imperial seat, from which you could command the whole length of the course. Beyond that point there is no luxury of which the human mind is capable. It must surely be what Hakluyt was thinking of when his heroic mariners went in search of "a great towne called El Dorado." There might be people of expensive tastes in Cathay, "the beautiful people eating with knives of golde"; but if they had any sense, they would have put their gold to better use and spent it on the sober luxury of the Jockey Club stand at Palermo, where your winnings come to you on salvers. So that friendly city stands in my memory with its long, narrow streets, where you sit down to dinner after ten and never go to bed. And it is not, one feels, for nothing that it was named Buenos Aires, since the airs are admirable and every air a tango.

PARTY-WALL

THE problem, if there is one, is distinctly baffling, since it relates to two communities of charming people. Most race problems are simplified for onlookers because they generally deal with two sets of human beings, one of which is obviously detestable. In such cases our prejudices, at any rate, know which way to run ; and the problem is gradually reduced to finding means of keeping the two groups apart or of assimilating them by improving the nastier of the two. (The drastic method of total elimination preferred by the late Sultan Abdul Hamid in the unfortunate instance of the Armenians may be discarded.) But in the present instance the problem is presented by two delightful groups inhabiting a single country—and even, in the majority of cases, a single city. I am fully justified in terming them delightful, because I have dined with them too often to think of them otherwise ; and I should be charmed to dine with all of them again, whether by summons to wear a black tie behind the trim hedgerows of Hurlingham at 8 p.m., or by a more verbose reminder *para recordar que el Dr. — y Señora tendrán el placer de recibir al Señor y Señora Philip Guedalla el Miércoles 18 a las 9½ p.m.*

Indeed, it was while dining with them that the problem first occurred to me. For those pleasant evenings, which broke up towards one o'clock under the reproachful eye of a hostess who felt that things could not have been going well for guests to leave so early, suggested grave reflections. They were so enjoyable that social life in Buenos Aires seemed at first sight to present residents with opportunities for endless variety—sometimes an evening among Argentines, sometimes with their own fellow-countrymen from England ; little parties where the leading language would be Spanish without prejudice to a few British couples, and

nights when English hostesses would ask their friends to meet some Argentines. But the odd thing about it was that I seemed never to be present at one of these charming international occasions for which the mixed population of Buenos Aires presented, as I thought, such admirable opportunities ; and it was gradually borne in upon me that the reason for my missing them was that they practically never happened. For it is the social paradox of Buenos Aires that it contains two friendly and civilised communities which work together all day long and very rarely meet at night.

The friendship of Englishmen and Argentines is a commonplace which has made possible the history and development of Argentina. No British visitor can fail to notice it, since it is an odd sensation for an Englishman abroad to be loved for himself alone. There is something rare and startling in the sight of them being honoured and esteemed on the simple ground of being English. I do not mean that incoming steamers at Buenos Aires are greeted by ecstatic deputations which lead the British passengers ashore with garlands round their necks. There are few flowers at the North Basin. Yet the flowers, though invisible, are there ; for Argentina has a strong prejudice in favour of Englishmen. The consequence is that British visitors to Argentina know themselves to be something more (or less) than mere foreigners. For on the continent of Europe we feel ourselves to be one hundred per cent. aliens ; and there are circles in the United States where we are painfully aware of being foreigners of a percentage of one hundred and ten (or thereabouts). But in the Argentine we feel with every breath we draw that we are not more than sixty or seventy per cent. alien to the country and that, if we are foreigners at all, we are its favourite foreigners. That is a position of rare privilege inherent in the strange history of Argentina, a mixed skein in which many British strands are woven ; but it serves to emphasise still further the social paradox of Buenos Aires.

For you will find Englishmen and Argentines together in each other's offices. But how often do you find them in each other's homes ? I ask the question with a due sense of responsibility ; and I know the answer, since a visitor from overseas was privileged to dine on both sides of the party-wall. The truth is that after office hours the two communities lead almost entirely separate lives. Their men play a little golf together ; there is an annual Rugger match between them ; and a mixed lunch-party in town is quite a possible event. But how often do they dine together in each other's homes ? That is the real test of intimacy ; and it is one that Anglo-Argentine relations entirely fail to satisfy. It is wholly devoid of political or economic significance. It does not in the least detract from the reality of Britain's contribution to the growth of the Republic or from England's need of Argentina's products. Whether Mr. A. of the Insurance Company receives an invitation to dine with the Señora de B. or not, Great Britain and Argentina will continue to be economically complementary to one another. For in a world of cut-throat competition there is no point discernible at which a British interest is adverse to an Argentine interest. Indeed, since Argentina contains more British capital than any British Dominion except India, it would not be easy to invent one. Besides, each country produces what the other needs ; and all of us may pray with perfect patriotism for the prosperity of the other, since a more prosperous Britain will eat more beef, whilst a more prosperous Argentina will need more British manufactures.

These high matters are wholly unaffected by the social problem. But they make it all the stranger that contacts between the two partners in the Argentine adventure should be so comparatively restricted. The wise historian, since moral judgments went out of fashion with Carlyle, does not apportion praise and blame. He merely records facts ; and quite the most conspicuous fact to any newcomer is Hurlingham. Here, as the name indicates, is

something wholly British. Seventeen miles out of Buenos Aires a charming suburb clusters round an admirable club. It has its games, its dances, and its life ; and its contacts with Buenos Aires are almost confined to the successful effort of its male population to catch the morning train to town or lunch on Saturdays at Harrods. One begins to wonder whether the prim British instinct of keeping oneself *to oneself* dictated this retreat. Was Hurlingham the cause of the surprising segregation of the races ? Or was it just a consequence ? Did the egg precede the chicken, or did the hen come first ? And which of the two is Hurlingham ?

It is a fact, at any rate. But there may be other facts. Before one breaks in thunder on the heads of Englishmen (always a congenial exercise for English writers) with a fine denunciation of their gross insularity, narrow prejudice, and general ignorance, it is just worth examining the social record of the sister community in Argentina. Here, as well, certain impediments seem to preclude domestic intimacy. For Argentina is Spain's daughter ; and Spain has inhibitions about the home which render the admission of strangers a rare and guarded privilege. There are so many points at which the Argentine has progressed far beyond his slow-moving Spanish ancestor that one can hardly doubt that he will finally outgrow the narrow limits of the old secluded Spanish home. For instance, the stern rule of the duenna is being rapidly destroyed by his younger daughters' taste for golf ; since few duennas, even if they survived the drive to San Andrés in the two-seater, are equal to a walk round eighteen holes. So the Señorita golfs all unguarded ; and one Spanish castle, whose frowning bartizans looked down on generations of escorted daughters, has capitulated. Can it be doubted that the secluded Spanish home, which is ten times more a castle than anything dreamt of by the most self-sufficient Englishman, must go the same way in time ? For it will be manifestly ridiculous to guard the Señorita's evenings against the very strangers with whom she has been playing golf all day ; and when that discovery dawns upon

her anxious parents, their hospitality will be as free at their town-house as it already is on their estancia. That is the queer feature of this limitation, since it has little effect in the freer air of country life in Argentina. This circumstance, I think, betrays its urban origins in Spain ; and if it has succumbed already to the breezes of the Pampa, it cannot be very long before it breathes its last in Buenos Aires.

Those are the facts—the British suburb and the Spanish home—that make up the strange party-wall by which the social edifice of Buenos Aires is divided. Who can say which of them came first ? Perhaps the Englishman, slightly rebuffed by the barred windows of the Spanish home, took refuge in his suburb. Perhaps the Argentine was faintly offended by the seclusion of the British suburb and went proudly home to add a few bars to his windows. But how can a grateful guest of both attempt to hold the scales ?

FAINT THOUGHTS ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF A DICTATOR

As he was to be my first Dictator, I felt a mild, but pleasant, thrill. All my more enterprising contemporaries scored their Dictator long ago. You remember it, of course—their visit to the great Palazzo, the busy ante-rooms alive with secretaries, and then the summons to the presence ; the big, empty room with a writing-desk about a hundred yards away, the singularly perfect rose that was its only decoration, and impending over it that pair of brooding eyes ; the swift movement at the visitor's approach, the baby panther he was playing with stuffed hurriedly into a drawer, and those eyes advancing down the room like a pair of headlights, to be dimmed by the courtesy of the road on approaching the oncoming traffic into a flash of amiability ; the iron grasp and then the conversation, always the same conversation, about the inability of anyone to govern anything unless somebody governs them ; six minutes of this inspiring gospel, followed by enquiries after Hitler and Sir Oswald Mosley ; then the dismissal with an electric stare, a signed photograph, and a sudden gift of the rose (to ladies) and the panther cub (to gentlemen). It is a standardised affair ; but visitors who endure it have scored their Dictator. More negligent of my opportunities, I had omitted it completely, unless an interview with Mr. de Valera counted. I had not even seen General Primo de Rivera the last time that I was in Madrid. So my score until that morning was a perfect blank. That was why there was a thrill about the approaching interview.

It was always mildly thrilling to penetrate the guarded precincts of Government House ; and as one penetrated further, they grew still more guarded. One felt with a delicious *frisson*, as we walked down the final corridor under

a close scrutiny, that it would be highly injudicious to insert an artless hand into a trouser pocket ; and two figures in the last ante-room of all compelled a deeper awe. For those broad-shouldered gentlemen in unimpressive ready-mades were the embodiment of force itself ; their ill-fitting suits clothed the basis of all government. They were not tall, but their surprising breadth made up anything they lacked in height. The hair upon their heads was smooth and dull and black, and their impassive Indian faces had been cast in some material more durable than flesh ; a blow with a steel rail, one felt, would leave its mark upon the rail. These two plain-clothes men in bronze were the keepers of the gate, the very last line of defence.

After that, no Dictator could hope to be impressive, unless he happened to breathe fire or strangled anacondas in the intervals of dealing with his correspondence. Our host, indeed, was quite the reverse—a darkish military man with kindly manners and a charming smile. He did not glare ; there were no panther cubs about. He wore uniform because he was a soldier by profession rather than because Act II seemed to require a uniform ; and consequently he looked like a soldier and unlike the Captain-General of a fire-brigade. His talk was military, and I found myself diffidently embarked upon a rather technical discussion of Wellington's campaign in the Pyrenees. His manner was authoritative with the slight touch of brusqueness that comes from training with the German army ; but, unlike his teachers, he did not forget to smile. Indeed, it was not easy to remember that the kindly little man in front of us, who smiled so pleasantly beneath a drooping black moustache, had made a revolution just a year before. True, it had been an easy revolution. But that was just because the General had marched on Buenos Aires with swift efficiency, when his long columns came marching down the broad avenue towards the city, as his aeroplanes dropped reassuring leaflets on the roaring streets. There had been one awkward moment, when nobody knew if the troops

lining the big railway embankment would fire into him or not ; and machine-gunners had raked his leading unit cruelly at the street-corner by our hotel. That had been just a year ago ; and here he was, an unpretentious little man talking comfortably to visitors about the campaign in the Pyrenees. He might not put on Roman airs ; but one felt that a talk with General Uriburu should count as two visits to the Duce.

His politics are no concern of mine. But he was what not all Dictators are, brave and unpretentious. For I have seen him, conspicuous in the red band on his General's cap, shouldering his way through a football crowd. And how many Dictators of the familiar pattern ramble as cheerfully as he did among the racegoers on Sunday afternoons ? After meeting him, I was quite glad that I had waited till I got to Buenos Aires to score my first Dictator ; and unless the others are prepared to be as amiable as he was (which seems, from their press photographs, unlikely), I positively shall not meet any more.

GRAN CAMPEON

THERE could hardly be much doubt about it. A glance at any of the newspapers that morning was enough to tell you who was the leading figure of the day in Buenos Aires. For his name in streamers an inch high ran straight across the top of every front page ; photographs of him from all angles were richly supplemented by descriptive matter and by more photographs of scenes associated with his early life. His press-cuttings, which would have bulged an album, were uniformly respectful ; and the published comments concentrated mainly on the fact that it was years since a white bull had won the championship of the *Rural*.

That position is, beyond all doubt, the proudest that the country offers after the Presidency of the Republic. Indeed, it is uncertain whether the *gran campeon* ranks after him : the point has not been settled, as they never dine together. But the prize bull of the year at once becomes a national figure. For Argentina takes stock-breeding seriously ; and the fact is one that her competitors would do well to remember. For the spring Show of the *Rural* at Buenos Aires combines the social eminence of Ascot with the technical excitements of the Motor Show. Everyone is up in town for it ; the opening is a State ceremony at which the lives of Governments are often gauged by the demeanour of the crowd ; the judges are shipped out six thousand miles from England ; and the results are scrutinised with a solicitude which other countries reserve for Test Matches. Indeed, when rival owners spend as many thousands as competing Argentine *estancieros* upon importing the pick of the world's stock, it is not surprising that their offspring is impressive ; and it is not surprising either that it is not easily displaced in the markets of the world. For it will

take more than an Imperial gesture to find a substitute for Argentine cattle. The proof, to put it brutally, is in the eating. You cannot create quality by resolution of an Imperial Conference. That is a thing of slower growth. It comes from lavish spending on the finest stock and from the deep pastures of the Pampa ; and as you perambulate the alleys of the Buenos Aires Show, the results stir softly in the straw beside you—portentous sheep encased in wool like huge crustaceans in their carapaces, pigs of unusual silhouette, and gigantic cattle of all shapes and sizes. An appraising crowd strolls with you ; for it knows that Argentina depends more upon those quadrupeds than upon guns. That is a simple fact which helps to keep the New World saner than the Old.

The crowds wander down the alleys, lingering to stare at the competing monsters. But the largest crowd of all at any hour of the day is drawn by the prize bull. All hours are the same to him, as he breathes softly in his awe-inspiring nest ; for he is comfortably embedded in an enormous cube of fodder. At intervals, his respectful guardian prevails on him to rise ; and then we see that he is the size of a small locomotive, but more lovable, as (unlike many locomotives) his white bulk is suffused with pink. But he is mostly to be seen massively recumbent in that block of fodder. There is something singularly impressive about a residence that is entirely edible. More than a touch, indeed, of millionaire's dementia informs the whole conception ; and one begins to wonder why no successful Wall Street operator has ever built himself a house of *foie gras*. But the whole life of the *gran campeón* is very like a millionaire's. For that bulk represents a vast accumulation of nourishment and leisure ; and strange stories are told of his favourite delicacies. The tastes of a prize bull are often ruinous to purchasers ; and as you gaze at the mild-eyed bulk, it is not easy in Buenos Aires to repress the thought that the huddled masses round the docks would be better for a little of the same care. I remember at the end

of one delightful evening a lady who insisted prettily that one must be very firm with these Russian agitators. But urban housing in some quarters leaves you sometimes with the rebellious thought that there is little need to be a Russian in order to become an agitator. Those are some of the reflections that rose on an uninstructed mind, as the *gran campeon* munched imperturbably under the respectful eyes of Buenos Aires.

PASEO CON GOLPE

LE DRAPEAU DE LA FRANCE

A VISITOR to the New World soon learns to recognise the distinguished Frenchman as a common object of the sea-shore. Every tide, it seems, brings one to land ; and when he lands, the subsequent phenomena follow an almost uniform course. He has a good deal to say to the reporters about the *sœurs latines*, those sister nations which preserve in their relations a degree of acrimony familiar in so many families. But six thousand miles from Paris it is hardly necessary to complicate the issue by alluding to the painful fact that the sisterly relations between France and Italy are not unlike those which prevailed between Goneril and Regan, while both of them reserve for Spain the profound contempt felt by her elder sisters for Cordelia. The main thing is to cling hard to a shadowy conception of sympathy between Latins and to discharge faithfully the mission imposed upon all French diplomacy, official and unofficial—*porter haut le drapeau de la France*.

This note is bravely held throughout his subsequent pronouncements—in the great *conférence* before the Faculty of Arts and Letters, which ended with that noble image of the Latin torch passing from hand to hand along the shores of the Mediterranean until it crossed the ocean to be re-kindled in Tierra del Fuego ; in his less formal utterances, which would leave casual hearers under the impression that, if Argentina was not colonised by Frenchmen, Paris was colonised by Argentines ; and in his final message, which returns once more to the familiar theme of the three Latin Graces. For the French, elsewhere so intelligent, appear to be deserted by their sense of humour when making speeches in South America. Even the slow smile of Anatole

France forgot to flicker in his beard, as he began a lecture in Buenos Aires by solemnly apostrophising “*l'union intellectuelle des enfants de Molière et des héritiers de Cervantès. Frères et amis latins . . .*” The note was still more crudely struck by the judicious M. Hanotaux, who alluded to the whole sub-continent as “*une plus grande France.*” But politicians have a professional aptitude for letting cats out of bags ; and there can be no doubt that, in abandoning the Latin gambit and substituting for its unconvincing draperies the undraped figure of Marianne, M. Hanotaux was speaking from the heart. For the whole tendency of French intellectual penetration in South America is towards simple annexation of its mind. The French objective, as one writer modestly confessed so far back as the Second Empire, is “*a colony without a flag*” ; and the good work has gone so far that M. Poincaré concludes triumphantly, after studying the works of a Peruvian who lives in Paris, that “*America, Spanish and Portuguese by origin, is becoming French by culture.*”

If it is not, it cannot be for any lack of trying on the part of ardent French missionaries. For the lecture platforms of a continent ring with their eloquence, and no literary gathering is quite complete without their compliments to authors whom they have not read. But if their mission is to be completely successful, certain suppressions are essential. For one thing, no Frenchman ever felt the smallest respect for anybody who was not a Frenchman too. It is significant, indeed, that French flattery of South Americans can devise no higher compliments to pay them than to call them French. For that is the meaning of the whole Latin gambit ; and even the latest French visitor to Buenos Aires makes his bow to her with the slightly devastating tribute that she is very like Marseilles. The bland condescension which the comparison implies is inconceivable in anyone except a Frenchman : what Englishman would dream that anybody would feel gratified by hearing his capital compared to Liverpool ? But the French spirit, less diffident, goes

gaily round the world distributing patents of French nobility to persons and places with ample titles of their own. There is an innocence about the whole proceeding which disarms unfriendly criticism. Yet this gay recognition of French qualities in the most unpromising material conceals a deep conviction that there are no other qualities worth having. That is the fundamental error which disqualifies the bright intellect of France for international contacts. It is essentially parochial, with a parish bounded on the west by Neuilly and on the north by Batignolles. Its reading is exclusively Parisian, its highest flights of humour reserved for persons who commit the egregious blunder of speaking French with a Belgian accent ; and when it travels, it surveys the world from the windows of a French *wagon-lit*. Even M. Paul Morand, that literary Lindbergh, leaves his grateful readers with the comfortable impression that he is never really far away from a smart quarter in what is for him the only city on earth. For however far the most accomplished Frenchman travels, his intellect is never far from Paris ; and the fountains in the Place de la Concorde are the parish pump of the most parochial village in the world.

That is why most Frenchmen view foreigners with mild disdain ; and that disdain of theirs must be suppressed before they can hope to be in the least effective as missionaries in foreign countries. There was an instructive instance whilst I was in Buenos Aires. One of the most charming ladies in that town of charming ladies almost wept tears of rage because an eminent French man of letters had begun a course of lectures with the graceful observation that Argentines were well known in Paris restaurants as the patrons who never trouble to pick up their change. This airy identification of a whole nation with its vulgarians seemed for some reason to distress her, although I did my best for France by explaining that there is no higher category of praise known to the French mind than that reserved for persons who leave cash about for Frenchmen.

But my efforts were, I fear, largely wasted ; and the French cause in Argentina was gravely prejudiced by that Parisian's bland inability to see any Argentines beyond the *rastas* he had seen from his corner table in some restaurant at home.

This mood of faint superiority must be suppressed, if French propaganda is to have its full effect. Indeed, in Argentina the situation appears to call for still more drastic suppressions. For it would be fatal to the Latin legend to admit a number of disturbing facts, by which its symmetry is gravely menaced. Thus, it is unfortunate (but true) that British policy made possible the dawn of Argentine independence and that British energy has played a leading part in the development of Argentina. But as this admission would completely mar the Latin theory, M. Morand bravely turns a blind eye to half the history of Argentina, exclaiming : “*Ce qui a créé l'Argentine, ce n'est pas l'Espagnol, c'est le Basque, c'est l'Allemand, c'est le Français, c'est l'Italien. . . .*” The catalogue, it will be observed, breaks off abruptly before the British name is reached ; and there is something sublime in this determination to appropriate the credit, to rewrite the history of Argentina, substituting Frenchmen in the more favourable rôles. One quite expects to read on the next page that M. Georges Canning, whose ministry was the leading glory of the reign of Louis XVIII, called the New World into being, or that Almirante Brown was a Breton sailor ; and it might be just as well to add that French capital built nearly all the railways. But perhaps the intrepid author did not think of that.

In any case, the French campaign for the spiritual annexation of South America enjoys the powerful assistance of one local impulse. For the glamour of Paris is widely felt. A thoughtful student writes with a good deal of truth that “when Latin Americans go abroad, Paris is their Mecca ; France their second patria.” French models, which delight their ladies, satisfy their authors too ; and there is something almost touching in the confession of Rubén Darío, a writer of real distinction, that it was his dream to write in French.

This complex, to which authors of other nationalities are occasionally subject, seems slightly unworthy ; for it belongs to a mood of frank inferiority. However grand the tri-colour may be, it is a shade ignoble to haul down one's flag and run up someone else's ; and there is something uninspiring in the spectacle of little coteries of foreign literary men writing books in Paris with a vague hope that somebody will take them for French authors. But the mood prevails, because there has always seemed to be something vaguely dashing about literary work performed in Paris, a delicious hint of naughtiness that creeps into Dario's confession :

*" mi esposa
es de mi tierra : mi querida de Paris."*

That appeal is almost irresistible, and South America has made no effort to resist it. The nostalgia of Paris is, perhaps, the one emotion which the sub-continent shares with the United States. North and South America are both of the same mind in rushing off the boat at Cherbourg ; and little cliques of novelists from Maine sit at the next table in a Paris café to literary exiles from Nicaragua and Peru. It is a shade surprising to find the children of the South in such full agreement with Franklin's intimation that every man has two countries—his own and France. But the fact is quite undoubted, and in view of the extremely meagre ties which bind France to South America, it is a rare tribute to the efforts of French penetration, to the persistence with which France polishes her uncommercial links with the New World. There is no evidence that grateful audiences place orders for French woollens after a lecture on Molière. But national prestige is powerfully aided by such stimulants, and it cannot be doubted that they lead to something more than tourist traffic. It is significant, I think, that in a recent year the admirable library of the Faculty of Medicine at Buenos Aires issued for use a total of 27,980 volumes, of which 13,716 were French and 53 English. Without making

exaggerated claims on behalf of British medicine, it may be asserted that this proportion shows some disparity ; and I have no doubt that it is reflected with equal clarity in French exports of instruments and drugs. That is one small instance of the practical value of intellectual prestige, of the advantages which come deservedly to an enterprising nation that never hesitates to *porter haut le drapeau de la France*. There is a lesson in it ; but this is not the place for lessons, and I leave the matter there.

T I J E R A S

CLIO SUDAMERICANA

THERE cannot be a more breath-taking experience for any reader than to discover a whole continent whose history is new to him. We have all grown slightly jaded among the familiar landmarks of the European past—the Stone Age settlement, the first Roman colony (with photographs of half a circus and a coin), the harsh Latin nomenclature of its provincial days fading into the Middle Ages ; the reign of faith (with photographs of a cathedral)—of several faiths, with tedious particulars of an interminable civil war ; the Age of Learning, national expansion (with maps of undulating frontiers), the grave decorum of the Eighteenth Century sharply interrupted by the Revolution, by several revolutions ; the arrival of machinery accompanied by more revolutions, the Great War, and the present situation. That, with local variations, is an inventory of the past of any European state ; and the features of the Asiatic scene are almost as familiar—the early kingdoms, Alexander's problematic route, a slight intrusion of the Romans, several destructive conquests from somewhere further down the line, the coming of Islam, a blurred succession of dynasties that swallowed one another like boa constrictors between frontiers that pulled in and out like concertinas, culminating in the latest age ennobled by the compulsory adoption of typewriters and bowler-hats. North America is quite as hackneyed, with its discovery, first settlements, emancipation in a series of defeats inflicted on base mercenaries by righteously indignant colonists, early struggles, the unfolding of the West (with photographs of locomotives wearing cow-catchers like crinolines and the State Capitol at Lincoln, Nebraska), unlimited expansion, the World War, more

expansion, and then a sudden hitch. We knew it all before ; and just as we feel that history has no surprises left for us, we stumble on the glorious discovery of South America.

For here is a vast region of the world of which our knowledge, apart from a vague notion that it once belonged to Spain, is an almost total blank. The fact is nothing to be proud of, since a working knowledge of its history is likely to be of far more value in the next hundred years than a list of the Omayyad Caliphs or even a close acquaintance with the Second Punic War. But what a pleasure to alight upon a tract of history where nothing is familiar. For the efforts of ten thousand novelists have not yet dimmed the romance of the early years, of the first Spaniards peering uncertainly between the trees at the smoke of strange sacrifices, of the ample lives of Spanish Viceroy's between their palaces among the flowers and the incense of dim cathedrals in the shadow of vast mountain-sides. At that stage South America is, perhaps, vaguely comprehensible in European terms ; but the most surprising revelation is of its more recent history, of that region where we expect to find ourselves most at home and are most thoroughly at sea. For we must learn the long vicissitudes of an interminable War of Liberation that swayed up and down the continent, of men roaring songs of freedom as they whirled the *bolas* round their heads and lancers charging wildly round the stolid infantry of Spain, of little armies winding through the passes of stupendous mountain-ranges, of Liberators clasping hands in Roman attitudes caught by a thousand sculptors to lend dignity to a thousand squares. The whole mythology is unfamiliar. In the heroic legend of South America we are among strange gods ; and the delicious air of novelty continues to pervade the whole succeeding century. For we must learn a full gamut of new names, to count the blessings of the Treaty of Ancón, to look back at the golden age of Bartolomé Mitre, to thrill with the heroes of Yatay and Humaitá, to uncover as we recall the crowning mercy of Caseros. It is singularly

refreshing to breathe the new air of a scene where every landmark is quite unfamiliar ; and there is nothing to be said for the supercilious Frenchman who, confronted with a national hero in Buenos Aires, murmured helplessly, "*La bataille de Santa-Rosa . . . Qu'est-ce qu'on peut dire à un général qui a gagné la bataille de Santa-Rosa ?*" The same, one might reply, as anyone would say to a soldier who had won Austerlitz or Gravelotte or the Marne or any of the names familiar to the devotees of European legend. But the delight of an excursion into South American history is its almost total novelty, the rich profusion of unaccustomed names undimmed by any connotation of class-room tedium. Bring me my list of Chilean Presidents. Or hear me, if you will, the battles of the Paraguayan War. A miracle has happened : for the first time since leaving school I am prepared to learn something.

CINCINNATUS IN HAMPSHIRE

THE house stood by the river, and the river wound through the green English country. The tall columns of a Grecian portico lent it a stately air, and it surveyed the pleasant scene from all its windows. So did the two old gentlemen pacing slowly up and down in front of it. The shining reaches of the river and the big trees in the park composed an admirable picture. Visitors to Broadlands were frequently constrained to assure their hostess that they had seen nothing lovelier ; and if they did not, Lord Palmerston would say it for them. For the Prime Minister took pride in his possessions ; there were more pheasants in his woods than elsewhere ; his race-horses were unequalled, although they rarely ran except at country meetings ; and he surveyed his view, as he paced up and down beside his guest. Lord Palmerston was ageing now ; but though the buttoned figure occasionally slept beneath a tilted hat in Parliament, his eye was always bright at Broadlands. Even his billiards improved upon the Broadlands table, where he invariably made a point of winning if Lady Palmerston was looking on ; and the unnatural bloom upon his whiskers seemed to deepen in the country air. His step was always springy ; but the old gentleman beside him had no difficulty in keeping pace. For his visitor was singularly active too, a country neighbour from Southampton who farmed a few acres and awed his labourers by an impressive habit of saddling his own horse and leaping straight into the saddle. A strange old gentleman, he would spend hours of silence in the woods ; and after a long day of farm-work he often slept under the sky. But sometimes he would lie waiting for the dawn in his small bedroom. The little room was piled with papers ; there were trunks and cupboards full of them all packed with memories for the still figure on the bed, who lay

waiting for the dawn through the long silence of a winter night and seemed to hear the watchmen call the hours, as he had heard them long ago in Buenos Aires—

*¡ Viva la Confederacion Argentina !
¡ Mueran los salvajes asquerosos unitarios !
¡ Muera el loco traidor, salvaje unitario Urquiza !*

But the mad traitor Urquiza had disobeyed his orders. For he had not died and, more treacherous than ever, marched an army to Caseros, fought a battle, and marched on Buenos Aires, where more traitors let their President slip through the dark streets at midnight with a little escort of armed British sailors ; the oars dipped in the black waters of the harbour, as a boat stole out to the waiting cruiser ; a ship dropped down the River Plate ; and through the long nights of exile the Dictator Rosas waited for the dawn in Hampshire.

That was in 1852. He had reigned in savage omnipotence for twenty years. His cold cruelty became a system of government, a successful challenge of the laws of God and man. Foreign governments learned to respect the icy tyranny of Buenos Aires ; and in the Argentine men looked behind them when his name was spoken with anything but abject praise. For death waited on his word ; the killing mounted to a wild crescendo ; and men could still remember how Camila O'Gorman died. There had been no other will than his, except when Manuelita managed to contrive a pardon with a daughter's cunning and all Buenos Aires sang :

*" En el Prado de Palermo
hay esbelta y olorosa,
entre nardos una rosa,
y es de carmín su color.*

*" Cantad, argentinos
el dia dichoso,
natal venturoso
de un ángel de Luz.*

*" Viva, viva Manuelita,
rosa que mayo nos dió . . . "*

She came to see him sometimes now ; for she lived in London with her husband. But he was generally alone with his memories on the little farm outside Southampton. At first he had visited a little and gone to race-meetings and impressed the neighbours with his horsemanship. He was quite used to Englishmen ; a young man named Darwin had once come to see him in the field, when he was campaigning in the south against the Indians, and had been much impressed with his gravity. Now he was grave enough, as he rode silently round the little English farm—his '*pobros ranchos*.' The cottage, where the old man housed his decent poverty, had quite an air of Argentina among the trees of its plantation ; and the lonely figure in the big *gaucho* spurs, with lasso and *bolas* at the saddle-bow, had strayed into Hampshire from the Pampa. He did not speak much, though he was always working on the farm or at his endless papers ; and sometimes there was a mail from home with letters from his children, or he sent them out a little money and a few handkerchiefs. For Rosas left his country with his hands clean of everything but blood. The friendly face of Palmerston was one of his rare visitors, and they met with some regularity. For Lord Palmerston could feel for anyone who had fallen from power ; and Rosas made him his executor. But that was one more disappointment, since the kind neighbour at Broadlands died first, and Rosas lived on with the echoes ringing in his ears. The years went by, until he died in 1877 after living, if it could be called life, a Hampshire farmer for a quarter of a century.

MAD HATTER'S WAR

I CANNOT vouch for it ; but as I found it in a printed book with admirable maps and portraits of ex-Presidents in large moustaches and striking uniforms or evening dress and beards of individual cut, I subjoin the anecdote with all due reserve.

The story opens in a mild domestic atmosphere at Pernambuco in 1861. It is not easy to believe that anything unusual could happen in the year that the Prince Consort died, when *Tannhäuser* was hissed in Paris and Earl Russell wrote interminable despatches about Italian unity ; but if anything unusual was in the wind, Pernambuco was just the place for it. A young married man lived there in a state of limited felicity with his mother and his wife. Practically everyone, that is to say, was loved by someone ; the son loved his mother, the husband loved his wife, and the mother loved her son. The one thing missing from this triangle of affections was any love between the mother-in-law and her son's wife. But the old lady found a lively substitute for it in jealousy, which took the pleasing form of making mischief. For she informed her son that if he went down the garden after dark and lurked among the bushes, he would see his wife meet a strange gentleman. She also intimated to the wife that there was something to be seen at the same time and place. After these agreeable preliminaries the spirited old lady withdrew to make her toilet, emerging a little after dark as the strange gentleman. The younger generation was no less punctual at the rendezvous, a watchful husband in the bushes and his wife at some less inconspicuous point. Faithful to her predictions, the old lady put in an appearance in her novel character of male impersonator. But it is not recorded whether the wife

suffered the supreme disappointment of encountering her mother-in-law in trousers, since at this point her husband, taking careful aim, brought off a highly creditable right and left, leaving himself an orphan and a widower. His prompt confession enabled the police to detect the guilty party, and the impulsive orphan was sentenced to an ample term of imprisonment. He only served a year; and after his release the unfortunate young man devoted his remaining days to missionary work in the interior with still more devastating consequences.

Purveying a mild form of higher thought, he founded settlements and chapels for the next thirty years; and shortly before Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee an untoward event occurred. For a local magistrate, who had removed one of the more attractive damsels from a settlement of his converts, was pardonably startled by the appearance of a few of her relations in his immediate vicinity. Nothing, indeed, was further from their thoughts than to retrieve their erring sister, since they were merely in search of suitable building material. But her master's error was excusable; and since he was a magistrate, he ordered the police to move them on. They failed to do so; and a reinforcement of two hundred gendarmes from Bahia was no more successful, since the wayfarers were conscious of their perfect innocence and knew of no reason why they should move on. Apprised of these events, the Federal authorities sent a major and some troops to storm the settlement; but the devotees of higher thought repulsed it with fifty casualties. Things were warming up; and fifteen hundred men with field-guns and a colonel moved up-country. But after a surprise attack, in which they lost the colonel, all their guns, and a good deal of ammunition, they moved quickly down again. The news of this reverse caused crowds to sack newspaper offices at Rio, alleging that the whole affair looked very like a royalist intrigue; someone was irrelevantly murdered at a railway station; and the Government resolved to take strong measures. Ten

thousand men under a galaxy of generals were concentrated in the neighbourhood. The devotees of higher thought, who had become progressively less mild-eyed as the war went on, put up a spirited defence, thanks to the guns and ammunition left behind by previous attacks. There was an engagement at a place pleasingly named Cocomorobó ; and the punitive expedition was reinforced by the arrival of three thousand men and a siege-train. The Minister of War himself took charge ; the settlement, after an unsuccessful storm, was besieged *en règle* ; and when it ultimately fell after a savage escalade, practically all the sect, including their impulsive founder, perished in the ruins. Such are the dangers which attend the propagation of higher thought by citizens of Pernambuco guilty of carelessness with firearms.

THE GOVERNMENT FALLS . . .

THERE is no use in denying it. The produce of the continent is rich and varied, spouting from elevators into grain ships moored along the Paraná, or slung from frigoríficos into the freezing holds of steamers where icicles hang in the gloom though deck-hands are perspiring overhead, or crated and boxed for Covent Garden, or shot from lorries through a manhole in the road to emerge fifty yards away on moving bands, where coffee-bags slide solemnly along the waterfront at Santos. But of all its products South America is chiefly known to the ill-informed of other continents by the South American revolution. Those spirited events, which serve so well to fill a column in a newspaper, have engaged the world's fancy ; and it is a little apt to think of street-fighting as the chief local pastime. By the simple expedient of never looking at a map it remains comfortably under the impression that traffic in the streets of Buenos Aires is gravely dislocated by a riot in Guatemala, which is not unlike a fond belief that an affray somewhere on the Persian Gulf disturbs the sleep of Edinburgh. Indeed, it can rarely master the distinction between Central and South America, or the essential fact that the Great Powers of the south differ in degree, kind, climate, population, and habits from the sultry atmosphere of a small fruit-republic on the Caribbean with a reputation chiefly confined to stamp-collectors and a population of ex-Presidents and United States Marines. Few citizens of London would feel complimented if visitors from Buenos Aires took extravagant precautions before a walk down Oxford Street, because they had heard so much about disorder in the Balkans. Yet that is the blunder made by many Europeans about South America. For they stare hopefully about them through romantic spectacles constructed by the late O. Henry ; and nothing would surprise

them less, as they sit comfortably in large cafés on lighted boulevards to watch the trams go by, than to receive a replica of the immortal telegram once handed to "a banana king, a rubber prince, a sarsaparilla, indigo, and mahogany baron" in *Cabbages and Kings*:

"His Nibs skedaddled yesterday per jack-rabbit line with all the coin in the kitty and the bundle of muslin he's spoony about. The boodle is six figures short. Our crowd in good shape, but we need the spondulicks. You collar it. The main guy and the dry goods are headed for the briny."

Such communications, it may be said with confidence, are extremely rare south of the Equator, though they are not unknown three thousand miles away. But there is often trouble in the Balkans while the omnibuses are running regularly to the Bank.

Not that revolution is wholly unknown in the more powerful and settled communities of South America. The application of armed violence to politics is an inheritance, it would appear, from Spain. Someone remarked in Buenos Aires that the sub-continent had been largely populated by Spanish younger sons, by spirited cadets, that is to say, who found life in a new country preferable to the less eventful calendar of life at home. But there is very little evidence that their elder brothers, who remained in Spain, were wholly immune from sudden impulses of a destructive character. For the Nineteenth Century in Spain and the Twentieth in Portugal were punctuated by every variety of revolution, riot, and *pronunciamiento*. Under Queen Isabella most generals in the Spanish army had been Prime Minister or exiled to the Canary Islands or besieged in Barcelona or all three at the same time; and the same spirit crossed the Atlantic with their young relations. This tendency was aggravated by an unfortunate taste for written constitutions. It was one thing to draft an eloquent adaptation of the Constitution of the United States or to obtain one ready-made (as was so often done) from the encyclopædic Mr.

Bentham. But it was quite another when a spirited Opposition found itself debarred from office by the rigid terms of some immovable enactment. In such circumstances there is very little to be done except to seize the Post Office, arrest the President, shoot a few troublesome policemen, censor telegrams, and tell the world that there has been a change of Government. For such slight irregularities are rendered almost inevitable by the attempt to confine high spirits within the narrow limits of a written constitution. Besides, the evident reluctance of most local politicians to leave office in the absence of compulsion seems to render some form of pressure almost indispensable. The same emotion, which is not unknown to the same breasts in other countries, is more rigorously controlled elsewhere ; for we know that we can change our masters by a simple act on polling-day. But if one felt that the Prime Minister was irremovable except by force, who can say how many unexpected customers the gunsmiths would get ? That is one particular in which the Old World can still teach a modest lesson to the New.

Yet there is often more display than malice in the apparent violence, since the customary insurrection, followed by the usual march on the capital, aeroplanes dropping manifestoes, and troops fraternising with the mob, may be the only means of demonstrating that the winning side possesses a majority. I do not minimise the gravity and inconvenience of the method ; but there is sometimes an atmosphere about the better kind of revolution that almost suggests a sporting fixture. Did not a friend of mine in Buenos Aires once begin an anecdote with the immortal opening : "As we were driving to the revolution . . ." ?

1870

THE dark young man from Paraguay stared at the showcases in an alley of the Palais de l'Industrie. It was the year 1855 ; and a judicious Emperor had provided the mild distractions of a Paris Exhibition in case his subjects were inclined to let their vivid fancy dwell upon the rather stationary operations in the freezing trenches outside Sebastopol. The visitor, considering that he was barely twenty-nine, was rather stout. He stared at the exhibits and occasionally said something to his party in a low voice. They did their best to catch what he was saying, because he was Minister Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Paraguay to the Courts of Great Britain and France. His father, who had made the appointment, was President of the Republic ; and the old man's family affections were laudably displayed in the further circumstance that, of his two remaining sons, the elder was commandant of the capital and the younger had thrown up a dignified appointment as Admiral of the Fleet in order to see the world, while the ladies of his family conducted an exchange at which their fellow-citizens were privileged to sell torn paper-money at a modest discount (subsequently transferred to the Treasury at par) or to obtain loans on the security of jewellery, which the lenders were a little apt to retain indefinitely, if it took their fancy. The stout young man, it will be seen, had formidable connections ; for Lopez reigned in Paraguay with the same unchallenged rule as the Dictator Francia. The visitor spoke admirable French and was greatly impressed by what he saw in Paris. There was so much to see ; but of all the sights that he had seen there were two spectacles that really haunted him—the trim, wasp-waisted officers in their smart *képis*, and a tall lady named Eloisa Lynch. Both, he felt, might with advantage be introduced

to Paraguay. As he happened to combine the appointment of Minister of War with his diplomatic post, there would not be much difficulty about the former ; and the latter was almost as easy, since the lady proved most reasonable in spite of being married to a French army surgeon who was still alive. An Irishwoman born in France, she was slightly affected by the prevailing Napoleonic cult. She might even make the dark young man beside her the Napoleon of the New World ; and if she could, the Pope might grant a dispensation and let her divorce her army surgeon and marry Lopez. Then, perhaps, she would be an empress instead of Madame Lynch.

The strange couple sailed for Paraguay ; and the Napoleonic dream drummed in his dark head. The years went by ; the old Dictator died ; and a National Assembly with remarkable unanimity appointed his son *Gefe Supremo y General de los Ejércitos de la República del Paraguay*. That was in 1862. His moment had arrived, and he prepared to be Napoleonic. The chief essential was a war ; and he provided one upon a princely scale. Indeed, he slightly overdid it, since he went to war with Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina at the same time. This was a shade excessive, as Paraguay was a small country and the enemy comprised almost the whole of South America. But the uncertain frontiers of the interior were rich in *casus belli* ; and if one was to be Napoleonic, one must not be afraid of risks. Besides, his officers all sported *képis* now, his infantry wore something vaguely reminiscent of the Imperial Guard upon their heads, and at a distance the cavalry of the escort in their brass helmets with the dangling horse-tails might pass for French dragoons. This was highly gratifying, although the greater part of his artillery had served as ballast in sea-going ships and would be more at home as posts at street-corners ; but when Lopez reflected that the sailors of his river-flotilla wore an approximation to French uniforms, he could have little doubt of the result.

Neither, it may be added, could the Allies, since the com-

bined resources of Argentina and Brazil (to say nothing of Uruguay) were more than adequate for the suppression of a small up-country state. The only difficulty was in bringing them to bear ; for nature had installed Paraguay on the upper waters of a river and behind an impenetrable belt of swamp and forest. In the ensuing operations there was a striking lack of strategy ; even Napoleon, one feels, could scarcely have manœuvred with his accustomed brilliance over that obstructed ground. But luck, Paraguayan gallantry, and the blind forces of geography protracted them for years. For years the Allies stumbled blindly along forest paths, gun-boats stole warily along the river beneath over-hanging trees, and Paraguayans yelled insults at Brazilians from entrenched positions. Generals were superseded with gratifying frequency ; guns burst as often as their shells ; and the derisive Paraguayans shot with bows and arrows at their exasperated foes. The endless war began in 1865 ; it was still flickering in 1869, although the Paraguayans were using women for their transport now. But Lopez in his *képi* and his scarlet *poncho* still talked in his low voice and dined with Madame Lynch and the Bishop, who played draughts with him all day. Now there was not much left about the war that any connoisseur could recognise as notably Napoleonic. But the Paraguayans knew how to die as well as Frenchmen ; and (like his great original) their obliging master let them. For Paraguay, which had begun the war with a population of over a million and a quarter emerged with a quarter of a million, of whom barely 30,000 were males. Lopez had destroyed a million souls, not counting any of his enemies : did the Emperor himself do better ?

As the war flickered out, the scarlet *poncho* flitted north with Madame Lynch and his children. There was a scuffle in a swamp ; and a charging lancer left Lopez in the mud, while Madame Lynch dashed wildly off in a bolting carriage. Their eldest boy shot a Brazilian and was killed beside her. There was nothing more for her to do ; now she would never

be an empress ; and there was no need for a divorce, since Lopez lay dead in the swamp behind her. Their dream was over, and she went back to Paris. It was the year 1870 when his adventure ended : Napoleonic schemes were apt to end that year. So he was true to type, although it was the wrong Napoleon. Perhaps he had not thought of that.

R U E D A

FAMILY COACH

AT first sight I did not believe it. It is a sound rule for travellers to disbelieve the greater part of what they hear and nearly all they see ; and although it was plainly visible from where I sat, my better judgment told me that it was not there. For we were in a moving train, and it was clear beyond argument that there could not be a clock upon the mantelpiece. Indeed, if I knew anything of trains, there was no mantelpiece for it to stand on. For mantelpieces imply grates, and grates connote coal fires, and nobody needs to be told that there is only one coal fire in any properly conducted train, and that is in the engine. But the odd thing about it was that, when I looked again, it was still there. For there was undeniably a clock on that extraordinary mantelpiece ; and, what is more, it seemed to realise that it was in a moving train, since it was screwed in place. There was a grate as well with a fire burning pleasantly behind its bars ; and as the evening was a little cool, we sat comfortably poking the fire, as the train rolled across the Argentine.

I think if anything was needed to convince me that it was no ordinary country, that astounding fireplace in the parlour-car supplied the proof. Not that the wonders of the train ended there. It might be a new experience to sit at ease in large upholstered chairs and poke the fire, as stations with names like Duggan and Pacheco and Kilometre 62 flowed past the curtained windows. But the marvels of our travelling apartment were not fully revealed until we went to bed and found a writing-table for the master and a large wardrobe for his Señora, the whole richly supplemented by an ample bath-room with such a galaxy of taps

as would have gratified the late Arnold Bennett and water that was steaming hot at dawn. There can be no experience that fills simple Europeans with a sense of greater ease than to sit boiling gently in a morning bath and hear the engine panting on its unending way across the plains ahead of them. Sit, do I say? Amalekites of more than human size might have reclined without undue precautions in that miraculous bath. Such glimpses give one a new standard of railway comfort, and I resolved to startle Enquiry Offices at British termini by first obtaining times of trains and then asking carefully after their plumbing. For the morning bath on board a moving train strikes me as the very crown of civilised luxury.

But let it not be thought that these splendours are the common destiny. For they represent the very summit of privilege, the best that a great Company can do for wealthy *estancieros* on their annual migration with wife and seven daughters from the plains to Buenos Aires for the winter season. In the present case they were the height of hospitality shown for no reason in the world that we could think of to guests, who were regarded by a pleasant fiction as persons of importance. So we stood gravely on the platform beside the gleaming splendours of the "family coach," impersonating as best we could the wealthy *estanciero* and his seven daughters who should have been its occupants; and there were even instances when a hospitable Company, noting our deficiencies in this respect, assisted the impersonation by supplying the daughters. For that reason, perhaps, those journeys have, in my grateful memory, an ineradicable air of musical comedy. Was it the chorus artfully combined of young gentlemen and ladies? Or was it that forgotten touch of Mr. Daly's magic which used to transfer all the characters quite effortlessly to the most distant places of the earth, where they all met up again without the least surprise? That was it, I think; and those cheerful dinners (at which the railway company displayed a knowledge of old brandy unusual among railway companies in less enlightened

countries) formed the gay transition from Act I, *The Winter Garden of the Hotel Splendide*, to Act II, where everybody was to reassemble on *The Prairie*.

But a more aged fancy was continuously engaged by the massive comfort of the whole proceeding ; and one traveller at least was given notions far beyond his station as a traveller. Will he ever consent to travel by a common train after the regal luxury of driving with his hosts across the darkness of the Pampa to a little junction, where a coach—his private coach—was waiting in a siding ? Nodding easily to the attendant, he ordered a round of sherry ; and trying to behave as if such things were normal in his life, he entertained the party in his lit saloon, as they sat waiting for the night express to which it was to be attached. Was that the crest of his imperial magnificence ? Or was it rather the next morning, when they woke to find themselves in the big terminus at Buenos Aires, moored in majestic solitude beside a platform ? After the bath, they murmured that they would be taking breakfast and hinted that the station restaurant was where this ceremony might be performed. But their ministering angel, deeply scandalised by the vulgarity of such a thought, waved them back to the saloon and ordered them to wait ; and presently that authoritative man appeared, bearing enormous trays and followed by a second cup-bearer. They were to breakfast in their private coach ; and, obedient to his benevolent commands, an awe-struck couple breakfasted in state behind their plate-glass windows, watched by half Buenos Aires as the morning trains came in. Did Nero ever taste more luxury than that ? But then he never went to Argentina.

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

It was a predicament in which anyone might find himself—anyone, that is to say, whose university career had followed a fairly normal course. My own, conducted upon customary lines, had been crowned some years before by the modest glories of a Bachelor's degree. But, an unexpected legacy supervening shortly afterwards, some freak of fancy prompted me to supplement this dignity. For it had been a shade distasteful to share my academic status with those unnumbered Bachelors of Arts who flaunt their names on notice-boards outside forbidding edifices dedicated to public worship in the outskirts of provincial towns. There were so many Bachelors of Arts, it seemed, and nearly all of them would preach on Sunday. So in my pride I thought that I would go one better and become a Master. It was a mild, but legitimate, ambition; a modest outlay and a smart blow on the head from the Vice-Chancellor would make it mine; and I proceeded, as the saying is, to a Master's degree. That was, for me, the summit. There were no other heights for any ordinary man to scale; I was disinclined to send an International Postal Order to a correspondence college in the Middle West with a request for its Ph.D. Doctorates, indeed, seemed a superfluous adornment, since they were mostly of Divinity and I was not a headmaster. So I resolved to face the world with modest confidence as a Master of Arts.

For years that dignity seemed to suffice. I rather liked to feel that I could wear a scarlet hood, if only I had got one; and there was a quiet satisfaction in the biennial exercise of a University (and plural) vote on behalf of a Parliamentary candidate who was invariably beaten. But my complacency was gravely shaken when I got to Buenos Aires. For I had hitherto believed that I was (academically) as good as any

man ; and the awakening was rude indeed, when I discovered in that learned city that I was dirt beneath the feet of practically all the passers-by. I had not landed in the place above eighteen hours before it was borne in upon my shrinking sense that it was almost wholly populated by my academic betters. I met a host of charming people, and every one of them was the proud wearer of a Doctor's degree. Doctors arrived in shoals at my hotel ; I dined with Doctors ; Doctors took me out to lunch ; the streets were full of Doctors hurrying to keep appointments with other Doctors in taxicabs driven by more Doctors. No, that was (I felt) the one exception. For everybody in Buenos Aires seemed to be a Doctor except me and the taxi-drivers.

It was a painful situation. How was I to lecture with a faint show of assurance to long rows of my superiors ? Talma performing at Erfurt to his *parterre de rois* was nothing to it. But I had reckoned without the perfection of Argentine chivalry. For the whole world combined in one benevolent conspiracy to hide my shame. Since it was quite inconceivable that any person of my evident pretensions should lack his proper title, I became, by courtesy, a Doctor too. The newspapers began it, since the first press photograph that showed me speaking from a sheet of Spanish manuscript gripped tightly in a nervous hand was tactfully subscribed : " *El Dr. P. Guedola hablando.*" After that, it went like wildfire ; and I felt almost slighted when any newspaper omitted my stolen degree. (To do them justice, they very rarely did ; and when they did, they made ample reparation, as in the gracious instance of that provincial journal which, omitting the doctorate, adorned me with the splendid name of *Phillibert*). Nor was the courtesy confined to print, since I grew shameless under frequent introduction by the title of Doctor. It would have been indelicate to repudiate the honour. Indeed, I almost think that it was mine by right for the duration of my visit ; for I was once addressed as Doctor by the President himself.

Can it be doubted that a President, who governed by virtue of his military authority and without the obstruction of a Parliament, was empowered to confer doctorates by nomination ? At any rate, I like to think so and to dream that I was once a Doctor in Argentina.

But I was sometimes more than that. For such courtesy as I encountered does not stop short at a mere doctorate ; and I was frequently presented to the world as a Professor. No one was harsh enough to ask what I professed ; but the perfect chivalry of this community of Doctors impelled them to adorn their guest with an academic dignity superior to their own. Bare equality would have been quite enough for me ; but hospitality in Argentina does not do things by halves, and I became a courtesy Professor. This was almost too much. An honest man, I felt, might possibly have overlooked a bogus doctorate ; but would he not repudiate a Chair to which he had no title ? I lacked the courage ; and I can only hope that friends in Buenos Aires will accept this tardy confession as the best amends that I can make. But whilst it lasted, the unaccustomed dignity had rare charms for the pretender ; and I tasted all the dizzy emotions of those courageous men who cash substantial cheques in the style of "Lord Ian Foljambe," which invariably inspires confidence in the romantic breasts of cashiers at seaside hotels. It was such a thrill to see myself in print as a Professor ; and it was sublime, when the attendant on the train enquired solicitously whether the *Señor Profesor* would take anything before retiring to his private coach. Take anything, indeed. Was it not enough that he had taken precedence over a whole race of Doctors ? Someone had told me that honorary degrees were unusual in Argentina. That has not been my experience ; for dignities were showered on my shrinking head. But that has always been the happy fate of Englishmen abroad. Did not the Continent a century ago invariably ennable the travelling Englishman as "Milord" ? Manners change with the spread of education ; and now they merely call him "Doctor."

GREAT OPEN SPACES

THE view that I remember best was from the window on the landing. The light came flooding in ; and as the visitor stopped on his way downstairs to see what was outside, he looked out and saw the Pampa. Or, to be quite exact, he saw nothing in the wide world. For the world, as he could see, was very wide indeed ; and it consisted principally of light. At first there was nothing more for him to see than a still universe of light extending to infinity in the morning sunshine ; and he stood looking at it from the landing window. But as he looked, the light resolved itself into a sort of landscape ; shapes were gradually defined upon it ; and there were slight differentiations of colour. For he was looking out over the rich green of a garden in the foreground, across a wide perspective of moving cattle vaguely outlined on the paler green of the middle distance, into a vista without end where the level green stretched endlessly away until it met the sky and faded into blue. The Pampa is a one-colour landscape ; but though it may be painted from a modest palette, the variations of its green are infinite, from the deep tones of the foreground to the faint whisper of its dying green that meets the sky twenty miles away. But each of them is plainly visible, since nothing intervenes between the watcher and the distant skyline. There are no features ; nothing rises up to cast a shadow or to break the long perspective. For the landscape has only two dimensions ; and the Pampa spreads its endless monochrome of green without a single vertical to interrupt it.

The world has other spaces ; but I know of none that are so level. The prairies undulate across the plains of North America ; the Sahara is a dry wilderness of dead river-valleys and sand mountains ; and cartographers portray the desiccated features of Arabia on crowded maps. But one

could hardly map the Pampa, where there is nothing to record. Its level surface is unbroken except by things that men have made—farm-buildings, wire fences, a rare group of trees, and the undeviating railway track ruled across its endless distances. It has no secrets, since there are no folds in it where anything could be concealed ; and it is a little startling, after driving home twenty miles at night, to look back from your doorstep and see the lights of the small town, from which you started a good hour before, twinkling twenty miles away across the night. But distance plays strange tricks with eyesight on the Pampa, where nothing is as near as it appears to be by a margin of ten miles or so, and one soon learns to view a freight-train puffing comfortably on the sky as a homely spectacle.

There are no other sights to see. As you ride out into the Pampa, the house is left behind among its trees. The track runs out before you into the never-ending green ; and as you navigate the immensity, the level green stretches away to meet the sky on every side. In the clear light a stack six miles away stands up as though it were five hundred yards off, and a distant mirage flickers on the sky. There is nothing else to see as you pound steadily along ; and there is nothing there to hear except the soft beat of hoofs on the green earth. The horses go at a slow gallop. It never checks and never varies, as you ride at that unchanging pace across the green ocean of the Pampa within the unvaried circle of the horizon. There is no sound except the hoofs ; and when they halt, there is no sound at all. The silence of the Pampa is complete ; if anything on earth is absolute, I think it is that utter silence of the plains in Argentina. A lamb half a mile away may break it for an instant, or a startled bird gets up under your hoofs and swerves off with a shrill *teru-tero*. But the deep silence closes in, and once again there is no sound under the sky. For though you may see for twenty miles, you cannot hear a sound. That silence is, I think, the most abiding memory of the Pampa. Mile after mile, it spreads its monochrome under the sky in per-

fect quietness. Cloud shadows drift silently across it. The colours change as the day fades ; the trees in the plantation round the house begin to cast a longer shadow ; voices come from the outhouses, where the peons eat their endless meals of beef and maté ; more cattle are still dimly visible moving across the interminable vista ; and as night closes down in silence, you may taste the deep calm of the Pampa.

EL OCHO

LONDON,

July 1932.

DEAR—,

It must be more than a year now since we first met at Cambridge that evening after dinner, when I made uneasy conversation and we stared suspiciously at one another, wondering precisely how unbearable eleven weeks of one another's company were going to be. *, I remember, the never-failing *, was first to arrive; and his judicious efforts to put me at my ease only deepened my embarrassment. Besides, he never wholly overcame his tendency to call me "Sir"; and what men of my age suffer from being called "Sir" by men of yours is something that you will learn one day. At any rate, my memory is still seared by the recollection of that embarrassed evening, when I had nothing for your entertainment but a box of Virginia cigarettes and said the wrong thing about Bolivar.

Or was it at Oxford? That, you will recall, was a more convivial occasion (I say it without any disrespect to Cambridge), when an open-handed college stood us an enormous lunch and we made despairing efforts to distinguish one another from the other guests, who did not matter in the least, because they were not going to South America in a few weeks. For time was getting short, and we were troubled by tremendous problems as to whether we should need to take riding-boots and morning coats and gowns. (Gowns, I remember, were discarded on the ground that uninitiated Argentines might regard a commoner's gown as a bad joke.)

Then we met again in London on the evening when you all came to dinner and I could no longer Burke the fact that there was a lady coming with us. You bore it, I recall, with

commendable fortitude ; and I spent the evening looking up and down the table to memorise your faces, because you had to be presented the next morning to another Oxford man at St. James's Palace. But I had not foreseen that I should be instructed at the last moment to present you by name *and college*. It all passed off charmingly ; but I have always been convinced that I invented two new Cambridge colleges. That morning strikes me as the real opening of our adventures. Do you remember the impressive start from home when, fortified with light refreshments and the lady cheering from the balcony, we crowded two Rolls-Royces and told them as casually as we could to drive to the palace ?

From that moment we had started, and invisible crowds somewhere below the Equator seemed to roar "They're off." Indeed, they were. Before the week was out, eight of you lined up in tweeds outside a boat-train at Waterloo to smile a last farewell into the waiting cameras. It was too late to turn back now ; Southampton came upon us a few minutes later ; and there was *Arlanza*, looking unnaturally large and waiting to engulf its nervous inmates. Then we were sitting after lunch and watching England fade away behind us ; and I disgraced you all by leaning on the rail at Cherbourg and positively talking to you in a sponge-bag cap and an immense Spanish cloak. (Your feelings were concealed, but I could see that you were suffering.) We watched the emigrants come off ; we watched the coast of France recede ; and then we made our first appearance at that imperial round table in the very centre of the saloon, which became our pride. At least, I know that it was mine ; for what could be more splendid than to preside with parental dignity over such a family ? Eight ties as black as yours, eight shirts as white would have filled any father with unworthy pride ; and as your temporary parents dressed for dinner, they did their very best to live up to their position. Breakfast was less impressive, because none of us got up at the same time and we breakfasted in twos and

threes. There was not much conversation, as * was never quite awake before eleven, and it was disheartening to watch ¶ indulge his unnatural aptitude for eating paw-paw.

One Sunday morning four of us went plunging down the ladder into a small boat that bounced invitingly upon the waters of Corunna harbour. There was an endless argument between a cripple in the boat and an authoritative person in a bowler-hat as to the proper fare. Bowler-hat was all for three pesetas ; but the cripple contended that the price was five on Sundays. As time was precious, we were strictly neutral and in no way surprised, when we reached the shore, that nobody remembered to collect any fare at all ; for were we not in Spain ? And do you remember how we were driven, in spite of all our protests, to the grave of Sir John Moore, where we did our level best to satisfy the local sense of fitting conduct for English visitors by drooping in becoming attitudes ? Then we were off across the hills to Santiago, saw the sights, lunched heavily, and nearly missed the boat at Vigo. There was more sight-seeing at Lisbon, when we went ashore again and two racing cars dashed up the new road to Cintra bearing Cæsar and his fortunes (all eight of them) with a good deal of fruit and a growing fear that some of you would manage to get left behind in Europe.

But Europe dropped away, and the real voyage began after that morning at Madeira when we all went bathing and ate the largest breakfast ever served by the executors of the late Mr. Reid. After that—we nearly missed the boat again, of course—the Western Ocean lay before us, and there was nothing but the long, perfect days when you took far too much exercise and we slept after lunch in rows on deck with a blue copy of Kirkpatrick's *Argentine Republic* open on every knee. For now, as Hakluyt had indicated, it was “ high time for us to weigh our ancre, to hoise up our sailes, to get cleare of these boistrous, frosty, and misty seas, and with all speede to direct our course for the milde, lightsome, temperate, and warme Atlantick Ocean, over which the

Spaniards and Portugales have made so many pleasant prosperous and golden voyages." Our voyage out was pretty golden. We knew each other better now ; you did not call me "Sir" quite so often excepting * , of course, in the intervals of his interminable conversations on the rail with our unforgettable fellow-traveller, whose mysterious relation to his lovely charge intrigued us all immensely (particularly, if I remember, ††). But her odd guardian was the chief attraction ; and * seemed to find it almost irresistible. I can never see a steamer's rail now without expecting it to be deliciously decorated by the striped seat of *'s trousers in earnest colloquy with George. And, in face of all denials, I shall always believe that when George roused me from deep sleep one equatorial afternoon to show me a dead bird that he had bought at Pernambuco, he did it for a modest wager. He said it was a present for his wife : I hope she liked it.

When we were fairly in mid-ocean, the ship came to life, which manifested itself in sports and fancy-dress ; and though our record in the sports was poor (our single win, if I remember rightly, was one small event normally reserved for children and old men), I like to think that our collective fancy-dress caused a sensation. The hand of Bakst was heavy on our Bluebeard, as she marshalled her five strapping wives (including * , a most deleterious *houri*) in portions of her evening dresses which were never quite the same again. But the *clou* of the procession was the white elephant, our pride, stepping impressively in four waste-paper baskets beneath a real *mahout*, whom we had borrowed from his parents. Speaking for myself, I found it more convenient (as we were on the Equator) to be a negro slave by wearing practically nothing except permanganate of potash, which departed lingeringly in the course of the next few days.

But South America was drawing nearer. Brazilian ports crept by ; and our Kirkpatricks were plied with a more feverish hand. There was a last excursion ashore at Santos, when we all bathed and lay about and lunched and bathed.

But Argentina and duty waited, and we prepared for life on land. At that stage, I think, all of us were quite prepared to live out the remainder of our days at sea ; and we should have received the news that *Arlanza* proposed to steam to China round Cape Horn with perfect calm. But that was not to be ; and one exciting evening we met our hosts in Buenos Aires. We met them rather late at night ; and as the night was late, we drank each other's healths and made little speeches in uncertain Spanish. After which we broke, contrary to expectation, into song. We were not musical, God knows ; but a bad habit of post-prandial song had grown upon us in the ship, and we retained it when we landed. So our startled hosts looked on indulgently while we broke into song. It was a complete surprise to them ; they rather liked it, I suspect ; and the legend of the frigid Briton died on those uncertain harmonies.

Then we were fairly launched on our career in Argentina. Now we did not see nearly so much of one another, meeting in crowds and nodding amiably to each other across the great spaces of public occasions, where somebody made speeches—and it was generally me. How extremely tired you must have got of listening to me making speeches ! True, I assured you that there was not the slightest need for you to attend these melancholy occasions. But there was one exception, when I was sentenced to the ordeal of my first discourse in Spanish before the whole *élite* of Buenos Aires and felt an unbearable need of friendly faces somewhere in the audience. So I resorted to the low artifice of intimating casually that there would be light refreshments at the Plaza after the lecture. That was unworthy, because I think you would have come anyhow out of sheer pity. But how good it was to see that formidable audience fringed reassuringly by eight familiar faces ! The crowded days stole by, to say nothing of the still more crowded nights. (You never told me, when I wandered in each morning after nine to talk to you in bed about the day's arrangements and implore somebody to see that ¶ was dressed in time for

lunch, how very recently your beds had claimed you.) You dined, you rode, you danced, you read papers on income tax in Spanish to entranced assemblies.

And then eight magnificently variegated dressing-gowns perched all round my sitting-room one morning to draw up the list of guests to be invited to our stupendous cocktail party in the ship the night before we sailed for home. That must have been the first time for weeks that we had all met ; and when we found each other in the observation-car of the International bound for the Andes, it was quite a reunion. We met more frequently towards the end and paraded at full strength, when the last evening came. It came, as you recall, and went ; and when it went, it left behind the grey disillusion of the morning when the ship sailed. Some of you must have found that morning a shade greyer than others ; and most of us expect to live in comfort by blackmailing §, that figure of unutterable woe, through the remaining years of his successful and unblemished career.

The siren went ; the last words were spoken, each according to his station—mine to reporters and yours to young ladies whose tears bedewed the quay ; and *Almanzora* headed slowly down the River Plate. Then we sank back into deck-chairs and repaired our shattered constitutions with profound repose and tonic water. You did not take much exercise on the way home ; there was a lot to talk about ; and most of us, I think, were shadowed by the thought that it would all be over soon. Brazil crept by once more ; the palms of Pernambuco faded into the haze behind us ; and we sat talking in the shade, while ‡ plied an unwearied pen upon the mounting pages of his Journal, that incomparable record, to which this little book of mine is deeply indebted. Europe was reaching out for us in the uncomfortable form of wireless bulletins about an imminent Election, to which one of us was doomed. But he received more pleasant news one morning, when the crackling aerial informed him that a book of his had just been published. This was plainly an

occasion, since it coincided neatly (if we could wait until after dinner) with our crossing of the Line. So we dined together with some amplitude in combined honour of the Equator and the Duke of Wellington (those diverse types); and after dinner someone fumbled with a parcel under the table and fished up a presentation *poncho*, and †† made a little speech, and the most hardened public speaker at the table returned the shortest answer of his whole career, because he could hardly find the voice to thank you in. Then the real business of the evening opened; for it was plainly fitting to pay due respects to the Equator. An *alibi* party made itself conspicuous under the lights on deck, while picked men proceeded through the gloom of the upper regions to where a solitary cord controlled the ship's siren. That once located, they took the necessary steps; and *Almanzora*, to her own surprise, roared greetings to the lonely Line. Indeed, all shipping in the neighbourhood learned, if it heard aright, that the stately vessel proposed to go astern.

Unhappily she did not; and the days went by until we were off Portugal and dined together for the last time at sea. I could not resist printing on our menu the words that Wellington once spoke to a lady, as he watched his officers at play: "For sixteen years I have always been at the head of our army, and I must have these gay fellows round me." Our campaign was nearly over now, although you did your best to gild its close with an incomparable *cabaret* performed on deck at some unholy hour before a grateful audience of two. Next morning we were in the Tagus; the Sud Express was waiting with steam up to hurl your two dejected parents, their travels ended, across Spain into an unappetising wilderness of English politics. But you were at the station with flowers and chocolates—more chocolates than I have ever seen in the same box—and as the train moved out of Lisbon, you woke the echoes of the hollow station with a cheer that sent all the memories of all the times that we had had together crowding into the small compartment.

RHAPSODY IN GREY

THE first mutter of the approaching storm came from a lady. They were somewhere in Indiana, and courtesy required that when the vote of thanks had died away she should hand the blushing lecturer an unobtrusive pay-envelope. But when this charming gesture was achieved, she intimated that its contents were about half what they should have been and that the balance would be paid by cheque. The reason that she gave sounded a little ominous : her bank was, it seemed, a savings bank and did not favour large withdrawals. There was no indication whether its prejudice was founded on abstract moral bias in favour of saving or had any darker cause. But we dismissed the episode as a mere evidence of exaggerated caution in a relatively small community. After all, Detroit, where every bank had closed, was a long way off ; and that calamity might well have its explanation in the entanglement of local finance in the unprosperous affairs of motor manufacturers or in some turn of the obscure vendetta between the banks and Mr. Ford. But we were confidently headed for Chicago and its gleaming lake-front and the bright spaces of Lake Michigan. (How New York has managed to appropriate the admiration which belongs by every right of beauty and design to Chicago is one of the abiding mysteries of organised publicity.)

Not that the subject of the banks was ever wholly absent. For talk in observation-cars tended to run upon the terrifying total of bank-failures in the past two years and the impressive contrast with the unbroken banks of Canada and England. Called upon for explanations, the British traveller suggested shyly that it always looked to him as if anyone with cash enough to pay a sign-painter could hang out a board inscribed "First National Bank of Dry Springs" and go into business as a banker, and that, in this event, depositors

might reasonably look for trouble. Eager Americans were quick to add darker explanations, suggesting angrily that politics had somehow got into banking and that a borrower who had a "pull" was apt to get loans upon the slenderest security. (The fierce alacrity with which citizens denounce their institutions without the slightest effort to improve them is a perennial surprise.) But you encountered everywhere a grim determination to render impossible another banking *débâcle*.

The next stage came quite suddenly and from a sky that was, if not exactly clear, no more than usually cloudy. Depression had become endemic; it replaced Prohibition as a theme of railroad conversation; and the nation seemed to have settled down to it with something of the same resentful acquiescence. One heard less about it in the South, because presumably the South had less to lose. (That is one advantage of impoverishment: you cannot gamble away under Hoover what was taken away under Grant.) But the East and Middle West were sodden with Depression. Social devices which a few years back were rudely mocked at as degraded evidences of old-world effeteness were canvassed eagerly; the crooning songs of radio programmes were punctuated by earnest little talks upon the elements of Unemployment Insurance; and citizens admitted privately that unless the community could learn the habit of tax-paying, it might have to face a transfer of wealth by more uncomfortable means in the near future. If the crisis gave them time to hammer out solutions, there was a fair prospect of adjusting it with good will and the cheerful impetus of a new Administration.

But would it? There was a cloud no larger than a Ford across the banks in Michigan. Elsewhere excited Governors began to gratify reporters with midnight conferences of local bank presidents; and, conscious of their duty, the reporters passed on the excitement. Scared depositors opened their newspapers to read that the men who were holding all their money had been closeted with the authorities. That did not

look so good ; and they had not any too much confidence in bankers to begin with. For the United States at large had come to think of any banker as a man who makes a dubious fortune by lending other people's money on insufficient security in the intervals that he can spare from selling worthless bonds to his confiding customers. That loss of confidence was rounded off by the official scurryings of Mr. Hoover's last week in office, duly dramatised by an efficient Press. That was, at any rate, how the crisis came to Chicago.

The city by the lake was big and bright as usual. There were more empty shops and fewer shows at the theatres ; and the Police Department, as the car spun down the broad avenue picking up hoarse wireless intimations of suburban homicides, pushed its gun a little farther under the driving seat and volunteered the information that the pickpockets were now reduced by the depression to picking one another's. But there was no reason in the world that anyone could see for economic extremities. None, that is to say, excepting those that they could find in the newspapers. Those heated narratives of bankers in anxious conference were enough to quicken any pulse ; and pulses duly quickened. One morning there was a quiet crowd on the pavement outside a downtown bank and armed guards inside, standing in leather coats and fingering their automatics, as they watched busy cashiers shuffle their property across the counter to gratified depositors. Two days were passed in that agreeable exercise —two days of novel spectacles for European visitors, who had never seen a run on a bank. Meanwhile the newspapers made no attempt to stop the rush, to create confidence, to tell depositors that it was just a shade unpatriotic to line their pockets at an awkward moment for the country's banking system. Perhaps no one would have paid attention if they had ; but they never tried. The run continued ; and then the banks were closed by law. Without pretending to unravel their too complex economics, it may be said that in whole sections of the country where the banking position was essentially sound the banks were closed by public suspicion

and the newspapers. So the national indignity of universal bank suspension was just one more blessing conferred upon a suffering people by its enterprising Press.

Not that anyone between the Rocky Mountains and the sea appeared to find anything in the least saddening in the forced closing of every bank in the country and the temporary disappearance of the dollar from the markets of the world. Everybody grinned and bore it with almost too much cheerfulness. There was a fine disposition to help one another out of trouble, and the wandering Englishman came in for his fair share of this admirable temper. It was all regarded as just one more convulsion of the teething infant of the New World, which would precede its final growth. Indeed, the customary effort to attribute American misadventure to European machinations was bravely made in one "official circle" at Washington, where someone told the Press that "Americans selling their country short and British manipulations of foreign exchange markets are at the bottom of the virtual suspension of the gold standard by the United States. . . . England has been juggling its so-called equalisation fund in such a way as to draw gold out of this country." Much may be forgiven to over-driven public servants at a grave crisis in their country's fortunes ; but this angry fairy-tale is far too reminiscent of the child that eats too much jam and blames the man next door for the inevitable consequences. In other quarters there is less tendency to look three thousand miles away to find a cause for the collapse of banking. Most citizens are apt to think the bankers a sufficient cause of any failure, and in that profound conviction to go about their business with a fixed resolve that it is never going to happen again.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

As the low coast of Portugal recedes and the sea takes on the deeper colours of mid-ocean, something seems to happen to the whole perspective of affairs at home. The Continent drops back into the haze behind the liner's wake ; the hourly pressure of the news is filtered through the wireless until it dwindles to a tiny drip of three or four items ; and the old intimacy with the swiftly changing scene in half a dozen capitals is soon replaced by a more balanced survey. For as the distance lengthens, Europe has ceased to be a slightly breathless succession of anecdotes of doubtful authenticity and, instead of the familiar welter, presents a field where ordered processes can almost be discerned and judgments hazarded. This tendency increases, as the meagre stars of a new hemisphere climb above the rim of the night sky ; and before the green and yellow of the first Brazilian flag slides by, the traveller feels that, however slight his knowledge of Brazil may be, he knows a good deal more of Europe than he did on that afternoon a fortnight earlier when he turned his back on it. For the judicious traveller occasionally looks over his shoulder : that is half the value of long-distance travel.

The historian, remote in time, will be expected to pronounce a final and impartial judgment upon contemporary events (with the additional advantage that we shall not be there to contradict him). But the contemporary will sometimes find that, if he is remote in place, he can acquire a touch of the historian's detachment. Survey a country, with whose life and politics you are embarrassingly familiar, from a distance of several thousand miles ; and you will find the murmur of your prejudices fainter, the crowds of inessentials less distracting than if the task had been attempted in your own arm-chair at home. That is the value of a

glance at Europe from the surf at Rio. But so many visitors confine themselves to telling us about the view they saw, the view we know so well, the incomparable view of sunlit beaches creaming in the lee of mad, misshapen mountains, when we should so much prefer to hear about the views they heard, the views of South Americans surveying Europe in perspective.

Distance, as has been said, assists a just perspective. But one sometimes feels on opening the morning paper in Rio or Buenos Aires that there are other aids which might have been supplied without disadvantage. There is no lack in either city of balanced and informing comment. At least two great daily journals in the Argentine and more than one in Brazil supply their readers every day with comments on the world's affairs quite equal to the highest quality prevailing in Times Square, New York. But the news on which they comment presents, to British eyes, one singular defect. For, when it relates to Britain, the news rarely comes from British sources. It is surely no disrespect to other purveyors of the world's intelligence to suggest that they are naturally at their best when handling news relating to their own countries, but that their survey of the British scene can never hope to be more than a well-meant approximation (I recall the flaring narratives of Invergordon printed in Argentina in 1931). For that reason it is much to be desired that British news for South America should be supplied, so far as possible, from British sources in order that the judicious commentators of Buenos Aires and Rio may have the very best material to work upon.

Not that there is any shortage of material from other quarters. No country with a substantial German element among its population need complain of any lack of propaganda ; and, remembering the dimensions of its German elements, I was prepared to find a discreet blaze of swastikas in Brazil. That was the first surprise. For there was nothing of the kind. Some efforts had, it seems, been made in that direction. But, in spite of a compact and well-established

German population, the preaching was almost without results on the Brazilian intelligence. There are good reasons for it, since you can hardly hope to make a gospel of exact racial homogeneity acceptable to any of the great amalgams which compose the modern world ; and the small-town particularism of Bavaria, which sounds such nonsense to the unbelieving ears of the British Empire and the United States, is equally nonsensical in the vast spaces and blended population of the United States of Brazil. Besides, there is a special reason which obstructs Brazilian hearing. The whole history of the Brazilian republic, and indeed the later phases of the Brazilian Empire too, are marked by a peculiar and uniform insistence upon toleration ; and, given this healthy cast of the whole national intelligence, it is unlikely that any persecuting creed will ever gain acceptance there. For that great country is still living in the Twentieth Century and remains profoundly disinclined to solve its problems by a short cut through the Twelfth.

This obstinate modernity of outlook affords, perhaps, the most salutary experience for any visitor from Europe. You will find it almost equally in each of the great countries of the Southern Hemisphere which broke their colonial leading-strings a century ago. In all of them, with perhaps one exception, there was an early stage of political development to which their citizens look back to-day with the same lack of reverence as that with which a British voter now regards the Wars of the Roses. For interludes of varying duration dictators exercised control in almost every part of South America except Brazil, until the suffering democracies ejected them. Brazil, almost alone, avoided that infection by the mild homœopathic treatment of the Empire. But the symptoms were almost uniform in almost every other state ; and in practically every case these tyrannies were ended by an emphatic indication of the people's will. Rosas in Argentina, Francia and Lopez in Paraguay are old, ill-omened names with echoes of a gloomy past. The clank of chains, the rattle of firing-parties still sound in them ;

and, in consequence, few South Americans can be persuaded that a tyranny, by whatever more fashionable name it may be called, is anything but a tyranny and a step in retrograde. For South America has tasted all the fierce joys of tyranny with almost all its latest variations. The *dernier cri* in modish European tyrannies is ancient history in many parts of the sub-continent. Did not Rosas govern Buenos Aires a hundred years ago with the cut-throats of his party wearing a sacramental badge and a sacred party colour? But Argentina has long outgrown the age of Rosas and hardly finds it easy to regard his latest European imitators as the last word in modernity. That correction of our perspective is good for visitors from Europe. For the massed battery of the projectors may dazzle us when near at hand; but at long range we cannot easily mistake the Twelfth Century for the Twentieth.

The less eventful landscape of the British scene scarcely affords such ample opportunities for misconception and correction. But it is always heartening to stand back a few thousand miles from that familiar canvas and to survey its values in perspective. The South American has a fair comprehension of our sober march towards recovery. He finds it at once easier to follow and to believe in than his northern neighbours' St. Vitus' dance in the same direction. Besides, we do not bother him with the embarrassment of Pan-American Conferences and slightly Talmudic re-interpretations of an unwanted Monroe Doctrine. He is comfortably aware of Great Britain as a friendly presence (mostly remembered in the welcome embodiment of the Prince of Wales), with whose sporting, commercial, and engineering accomplishments he is respectfully familiar. Indeed, he is increasingly aware that there are other British products than steel girders and fat cattle; and there is a growing curiosity as to our science and our books and the more durable ingredients of British civilisation. For South America can see that there is still work for us to do together; and the British mind has become an object of intelligent curiosity. One misconception lingers; for there is a wide-

spread belief that it really makes a difference here when some organ-voice of Empire vilifies a British interest in South America in the sincere belief that it is serving a British interest elsewhere. Such utterances are promptly cabled out to Argentina, where they are found to be of great assistance by the well-wishers of other people. Loose-tongued Crusaders are not infrequently the worst enemies of their own countrymen; and the British visitor to South America is kept busy explaining to his hosts that these reverberating figures hardly signify in national affairs quite so much as might appear from cabled advices of their lonely ukases. But, that misconception apart, the South American vision of ourselves is tolerably just; and as the Needles slide past again, the homing traveller has few surprises.

